World leaders express condolences for space tragedy

Story on PAGE A11

GMA off to Kuwait amid war anxiety

By Carlito Pablo and Norman Bordadora

THE MOOD among Filipino workers in Kuwait is calm, members of President Macapagal-Arroyo's advance party to that trouble spot have reported. But they sensed a creeping anxiety as war loomed ever closer. *(See related story below.)*

GMA/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
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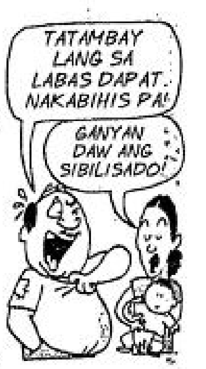
Shirtless ban to go Metro-wide

By C. Esguerra

TOPLESS to go.

In Bayani Fernando's perfect metropolis, there will be no sidewalk vendors, squatter shanties or shirtless men—and

SHIRTLESS/ A19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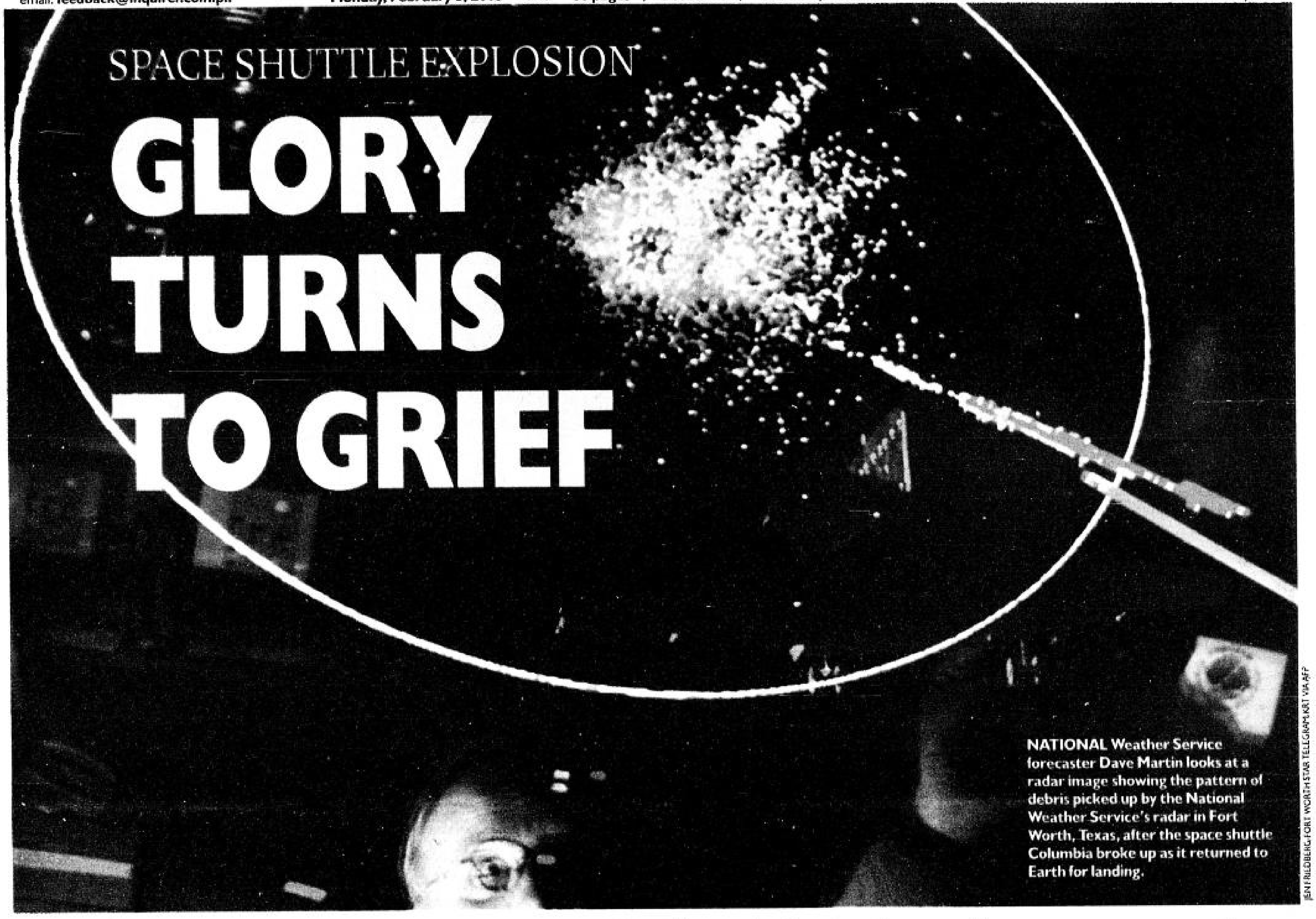


SPACE SHUTTLE EXPLOSION

GLORY TURNS TO GRIEF

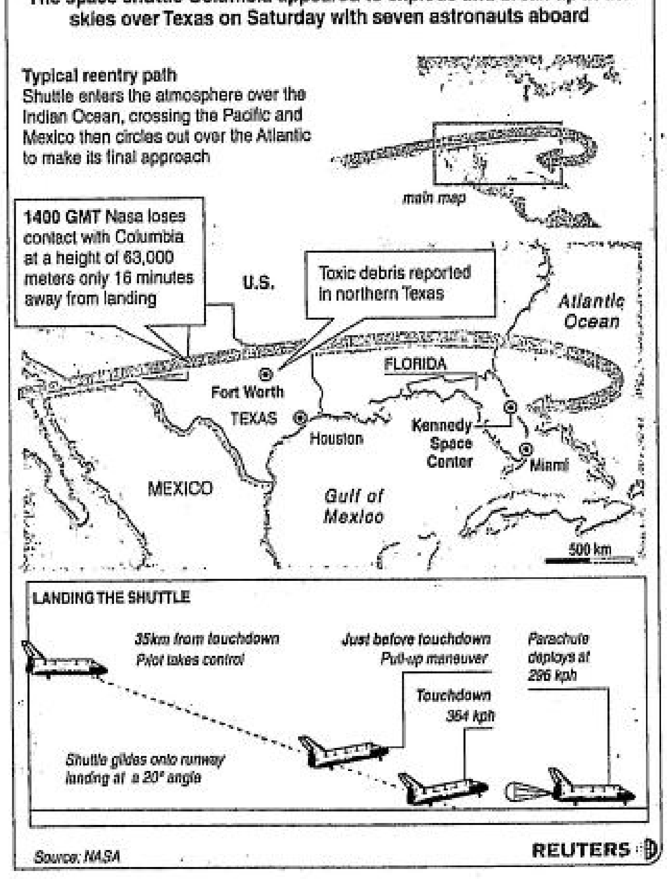
NATIONAL Weather Service forecaster Dave Martin looks at a radar image showing the pattern of debris picked up by the National Weather Service's radar in Fort Worth, Texas, after the space shuttle Columbia broke up as it returned to Earth for landing.

JEN FRIEDBERG/FORT WORTH STAR TELEGRAM/KRT VIA AFP

Columbia mission ends in fireballs; debris found

SHUTTLE BREAKS UP ON REENTRY

The space shuttle Columbia appeared to explode and break up in the skies over Texas on Saturday with seven astronauts aboard


Typical reentry path
Shuttle enters the atmosphere over the Indian Ocean, crossing the Pacific and Mexico then circles out over the Atlantic to make its final approach
main map
1400 GMT Nasa loses contact with Columbia at a height of 63,000 meters only 16 minutes away from landing
U.S.
Toxic debris reported in northern Texas
Atlantic Ocean
FLORIDA
Fort Worth
TEXAS
Houston
Kennedy Space Center
Miami
MEXICO
Gulf of Mexico
500 km
LANDING THE SHUTTLE
35km from touchdown Pilot takes control
Just before touchdown Pull-up maneuver
Parachute deploys at 296 kph
Touchdown 364 kph
Shuttle glides onto runway landing at a 20° angle

Source: NASA

REUTERS

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida—It was to have been a day of glory for seven families the world over.

In Israel, a brother had gathered to toast his brave sibling. In Wisconsin, another rose before sunup to see his sister fulfill a lifelong dream. And at a majestic waterfront launch site in Florida, families of divergent backgrounds and cultures had come together to celebrate an event that bridged the differences: welcoming their loved ones home from space.

In one gut-wrenching moment, their common pride became shared grief as they struggled to understand the incomprehensible.

"I think of everything from the day he was born until now," 79-year-old Eliezer Wolferman said of his astronaut son Ilan Ramon. "It is very sad, and I don't know what else to say," he told reporters in Jerusalem.

High over Texas and just short of home, space shuttle Columbia fell to pieces on Saturday, raining debris over hundreds of kilometers of countryside. Seven astronauts died.

The catastrophe occurred 62 km above the Earth, in the last 16 minutes of the 16-day mission as the spaceship reentered the atmosphere

SPACE A18

No terror strike; probers eye flaw in left wing tiles

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida—With the United States jumpy about the countdown to possible war with Iraq and the Israeli astronaut included in the crew of space shuttle Columbia, officials quickly ruled out terrorism.

"At this time, we have no indication that the mishap was caused by anything or anyone on the ground," said Sean O'Keefe administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa).

At 62,140 meters and traveling at 20,112

NO TERROR/ A18

Crew a picture of cultural and ethnic diversity

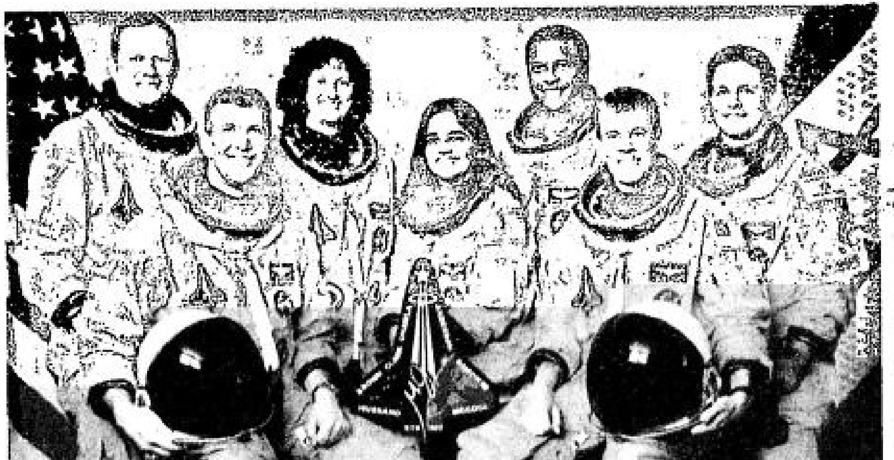
THE SEVEN astronauts who died Saturday when the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated on reentry were the picture of ethnic and cultural diversity.

The 16-day STS-107 mission was the first space flight for four of the crew—including Ilan Ramon, who also was the first Israeli in space.

Shuttle Commander Rick Douglas Husband, a US Air Force colonel and former test pilot, was on his second shuttle mission, having flown previously in 1999 aboard shuttle Discovery.

Born July 12, 1957, in Amarillo, Texas, and married with two children, Husband joined the astronaut program in 1994 and worked as chief of safety for Nasa's Astronaut Office.

CREW/ A18



UNDATED file photo shows the seven STS-107 crew members posing for a group portrait. Seated in front (from left): Rick D. Husband, Kalpana Chawla and William C. McCool. Standing (from left): David M. Brown, Laurel B. Clark, Michael P. Anderson and Ilan Ramon.

REUTERS

Palace downplays visit of top US Army general

By Carlito Pablo and Gerald G. Lacuarta

SECURITY officials yesterday scrambled to downplay the coming visit of the US Army's highest ranking general.

National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said next week's meeting between government and military officials and Gen. Eric Shinseki, US Army chief of staff, was only a briefing and nothing more. It will be "more of them (US officials) briefing us on what is unfolding in the Middle East," Golez said.

Shinseki was reported as all set to meet top defense and military officials to discuss the country's role in the coming war against Iraq, particularly to serve as transit point and as one of the hubs

PALACE/ A6

US war on Iraq to disrupt RP economic growth

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE GROSS domestic product's 4.6-percent expansion last year, the highest growth rate since the 1997 Asian financial crisis, exceeded forecasts of the government itself and the Asian Development Bank. It confounded both optimists and pessimists in the private sector, who have not come up with a satisfactory explanation of the better-than-expected growth.

The growth of the Philippine economy is one of the amazing economic developments in Asia. It comes at a time of global economic slowdown and in the midst of political uncertainties in the Philippines—an unstable environment that is hostile to growth.

The growth is good news by most standards and could lift the morale of Filipinos who have lost confidence in their ability to control their destiny and who need more morale boosters than setbacks, not of their own making.

US WAR/ A7

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: CHONA GALANG, PDI RESEARCH/06/28/02

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Mostly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Mostly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Mostly Cloudy
Legaspi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONTPAGE

Ka Roger laughs off gov't challenge

LUCENA CITY—Communist Party of the Philippines spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal returned the "take it or leave it" dare of Foreign Secretary Blas F Ople to the revolutionary movement with a joke.

Taking a cue from the former television quiz show "Kwarta o Kahon," Rosal said the communists would not hesitate to take the "kahon" or box and continue with their revolutionary struggle until they hit the jackpot of toppling the government and overhauling a "rotten system."

In the television game, contestants were asked to choose between cash and a box. If they chose the box they could end up with a prize or nothing at all.

Ople declared the other day that the government was ready to offer blanket amnesty to all communist rebels if they signed the draft peace agreement that President Macapagal-Arroyo is offering.

"If Ople is looking at his offer as a tempting one, for us it's not. For any true-blooded revolutionary, it's an insult to surrender and give up the struggle to avail of any so-called blanket amnesty," Rosal said in a cellular phone interview yesterday.

Ople stressed that the draft agreement was meant to be the final accord and was no longer negotiable. *(See related story on Page A4.)*

Rosal said the rebels are demanding that the government remove the terrorist tag before the start of any resumption of peace negotiations.

"The terrorist label should be removed before the start of the peace talks and not after the National Democratic Front signs the peace accord, if it will sign it," he said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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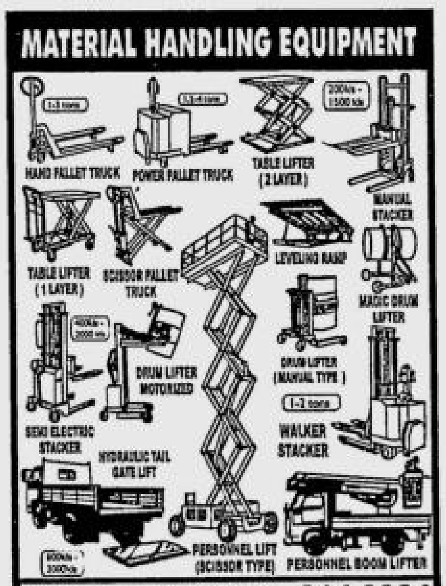

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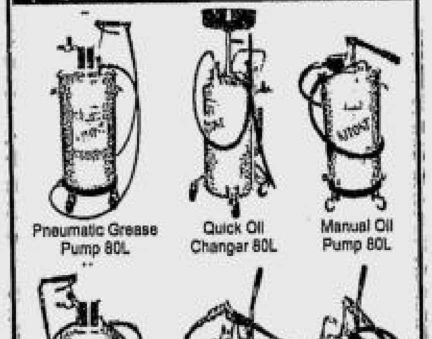

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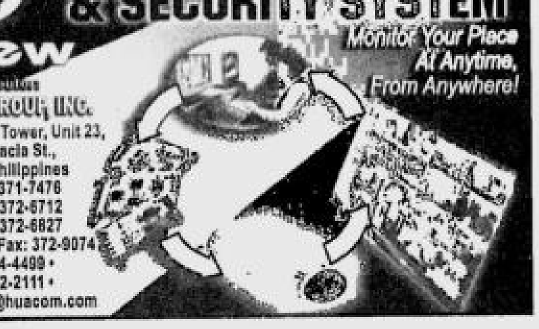

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Anti-gun group hits GMA flip-flop

By Christian V. Esguerra and Martin P. Marfil

ADVOCATES of a gunless society yesterday castigated President Macapagal-Arroyo for flip-flopping on her recently announced policy to ban the carrying of firearms outside the home, even as the Philippine National Police clarified that there will be no automatic exemptions from the ban for politicians and Cabinet members.

Reynaldo "Nandy" Pacheco, head of the Gunless Society, urged the President not to yield to pro-gun advocates and to stick to her original decision to stop issuing permits to private citizens to carry firearms in public.

"By heeding their demands, the President is yielding to special interests and not promoting the common good," Pacheco said in a telephone interview. "It won't be any surprise if our country turns into the wild, wild West."

Faced with pressure from pro-gun advocates, the President relaxed her directive and allowed individuals under threat to carry licensed firearms outside their homes.

Groups like the Peaceful, Responsible Owners of Guns (Pro-gun) have claimed that a total gun ban would deprive thousands of responsible gun owners of the right to defend themselves against criminals.

"These people are thinking only of themselves," Pacheco said. "How about the millions of law-abiding citizens who do not believe in the power of the gun?"

Instead of granting exemptions, Ms Macapagal should offer a hefty reward to encourage gun owners to turn in their firearms and strengthen the law penalizing illegal possession of firearms, Pacheco said.

"The more guns there are, the more dangerous our society becomes," he said. "We should remove all instruments of violence to promote a peaceful society."

PNP chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane made the clarification about exemptions in the wake of reports quoting him as having recommended the automatic exemption of Cabinet members and politicians from the ban against carrying firearms in public.

He said the prohibition applied to everyone. However, he recognized that there are people with "generic threats" on their lives because of their jobs so that exemptions could be granted in such cases.

But the "justifying circumstances will have to be thoroughly validated through a comprehensive threat assessment of the individual seeking exemption," Ebdane said in a statement.

He said the President's order was being strictly implemented and that some 31,000 permits to carry firearms outside of residence, or PTCFOR, have been cancelled.

The implementing rules and regulations for the gun ban order are expected to be issued within the week, as well as the implementing guidelines for Executive Order 171 offering a general amnesty, for owners of unregistered firearms.

There are about 328,000 illegally-possessed firearms in the country, some of which are in the hands of secessionists, rebel groups and criminals.

There are 813,000 licensed firearms registered to private individuals, government agencies and other authorized persons and entities.

Economic growth hasn't reached us, workers complain

OLONGAPO CITY— Partido ng Manggagawa officials expressed skepticism over the recent announcement by President Macapagal-Arroyo that the economy grew by 4.6 percent last year, the highest it has expanded since the 1997 Asian economic crisis.

Renato Magtubo, PM national chair, said that with economists like the President and economic planning chief Romulo Neri ecstatic over the growth in the gross national product (GNP), the workers and the poor "could only shrug their shoulders in disbelief and disgust."

"We may have posted the highest GNP growth since the 1997 Asian crisis but that is negligible to majority of Filipinos who are living in abject poverty. To the workers and the poor, the GNP increase means more '*Gutom na Pilipino*' (hungry Filipinos),'" Magtubo said in a statement.

He said the GNP growth should not be equated with social progress "because there could be so much growth and yet much underdevelopment."

The country's GNP increased by 5.2 percent in 2002, up from 3.4 percent in 2001. This was brought about largely by a 15.5-percent growth in net factor income from abroad, mostly in the form of dollar remittances by Filipinos working overseas. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Gloria set to visit US in April

THE COUNTRY is looking at more finance and military assistance from the United States with the state visit to Washington by President Macapagal-Arroyo in early April, Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople said yesterday.

Ople also noted that President Macapagal's visit, which will cover at least three days, will coincide with her 56th birthday on April 5.

"It is a goodwill visit," Ople said. "It of course can generate more financial and military assistance for the Philippines."

Reports said the President's visit may occur either between April 1-4 or April 2-5.

"She may have her birthday ...in San Francisco," Ople said. *Carlito Pablo*

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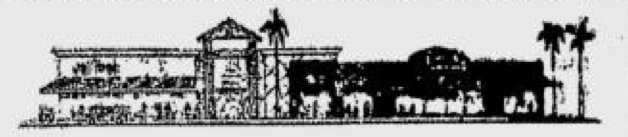

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Norway reassumes mediator role in peace talks with Reds

NORWAY, the mediator in the stalled peace talks between the Philippine government and communist rebels, has been asked to transmit the draft of a proposed peace agreement to the National Democratic Front leaders based in the Netherlands, Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said.

Norwegian Ambassador Pal Moe was summoned to the Department of Foreign Affairs to personally accept the copy for the NDF of the proposed accord, which the government has indicated was its final offer to the rebels.

Ople said Moe informed him the NDF had accepted Oslo's re-assumption of its role as third party mediator and host of the peace talks which are expected to resume soon after two years of suspension.

"The Norwegian government will play a crucial role in the country's bid for a final peace agreement with Mr. Jose Maria Sison," Ople said in a news conference over the weekend.

Sison, founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, is the NDF's chief political consultant.

Ople said the Norwegians would be providing airline tickets to the members of the NDF peace panel who are still in the Philippines once an agreement to resume the talks was reached.

The government has offered blanket amnesty to the communists who have been waging an insurgency for 34 years if they signed the draft peace agreement.

Moreover, it said that once the communists signed the agreement it would ask the European Union, the United States and other countries to remove the rebels from their international terror lists.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said he believes the US and EU would be inclined to drop the CPP from their terror lists "after the signing or on the eve" of the signing of the accord.

De Venecia said that before President Macapagal-Arroyo approved the draft agreement, he had met with Cabinet members and other House legislators to discuss a "joint legislative-executive strategy to re-launch the peace process." *Norman Bordadora with a report from Christine Avendaño*

2 Abus, Marine killed in firefight

TWO Abu Sayyaf bandits and one member of the 4th Marine Battalion Landing Team (MBLT4) have been killed in an ongoing encounter at Barangay Panglayahan, between the boundaries of Patikul and Panamao, Sulu.

Southern Command chief Lt. General Narciso Abaya said four other soldiers have been wounded. "They were airlifted (to Zamboanga City) for treatment," he said,

All three bodies were recovered by government troops, but officials said the names were being withheld "for the time being."

The gun battle was reported around 11:30, a.m. yesterday. After an hour, according to Lt. Col. John Martir, deputy commander of the Marine Forces South Command, "there was a brief consolidation of forces—about 10 to 15 minutes—then the gun battle resumed."

Abaya said the Marines hit the "main big group" led by Radulan Sahiron or "Kumander Putol," the Isnilon brothers Hapilon and Bakal, Khadaffy Janjalani and Antel Sali or "Abu Sulaiman."

The troops had been patrolling the area, Abaya said, because of reports that the ASG had combined with followers of Nur Misuari. *Julie S. Alipala, Roselle R. Badilla, Martin P. Marfil and AFP*

Group wants Sino fishers charged

THE WORLD Wide Fund for Nature in the Philippines has asked the government to follow judicial precedents in handling the case of 38 Chinese illegal fishers whose release had been sought in the spirit of the Chinese New Year which was celebrated on Saturday.

Lory Tan, WWF president, urged the government to have the Chinese fishermen who were caught poaching in Malampaya arraigned, made to file a guilty plea and pay the corresponding fines before even considering whether to release them.

He said the precedent had been established in an earlier case involving 122 Chinese fishermen caught in the Tubbataha Reef marine park last year and detained in Palawan. *Norman Bordadora*

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We are pleased to inform you that last January 21, 2003, Branch XXIV of the Regional Trial Court of Manila presided by the Honorable Judge Antonio M. Eugenio, Jr. issued an Order the dispositive portion of which reads as follows:

> **"Accordingly, finding the Motions impressed with merit, the same are hereby granted, Search Warrants Nos. 02-3127 up to 02-3130, all dated October 16, 2002, are hereby ordered quashed."**

In said Order, the Honorable Court made the following findings, to wit:

> "Evidence submitted by the parties show that the trademark "KAMA" is not registered in the Philippines; that neither Wuxi Worldbest KAMA Machineries nor Super Trade is the registered owner of the KAMA trademark; that KAMA trademark is registered in the People's Republic of China in the name of China Worldbest Group Co., Ltd., which assigned said trademark to Worldbest KAMA Machinery which in turn granted trademark license contracts to Wuxi Worldbest KAMA Machinery, principal of private complainant, and to Shanghai Worldbest KAMA Import and Export Co. Ltd., principal of the respondents.
>
> Since neither Wuxi Worldbest KAMA Machinery nor private complainant is the registered owner of the trademark KAMA in the Philippines, neither Wuxi nor private complainant can institute a complaint for infringement of trademark pursuant to Section 155 in relation to Section 170 of Republic Act 8293.
>
> Likewise, since both private complainant and respondents as distributors of their respective principals, and are duly authorized to import and distribute KAMA diesel engine in the Philippines and the KAMA products are genuine, opposing parties stand on the same footing. Private complainant cannot therefore claim exclusive right to the goodwill of KAMA products."

In the same Order, the National Bureau of Investigation was directed to return the articles seized from us.

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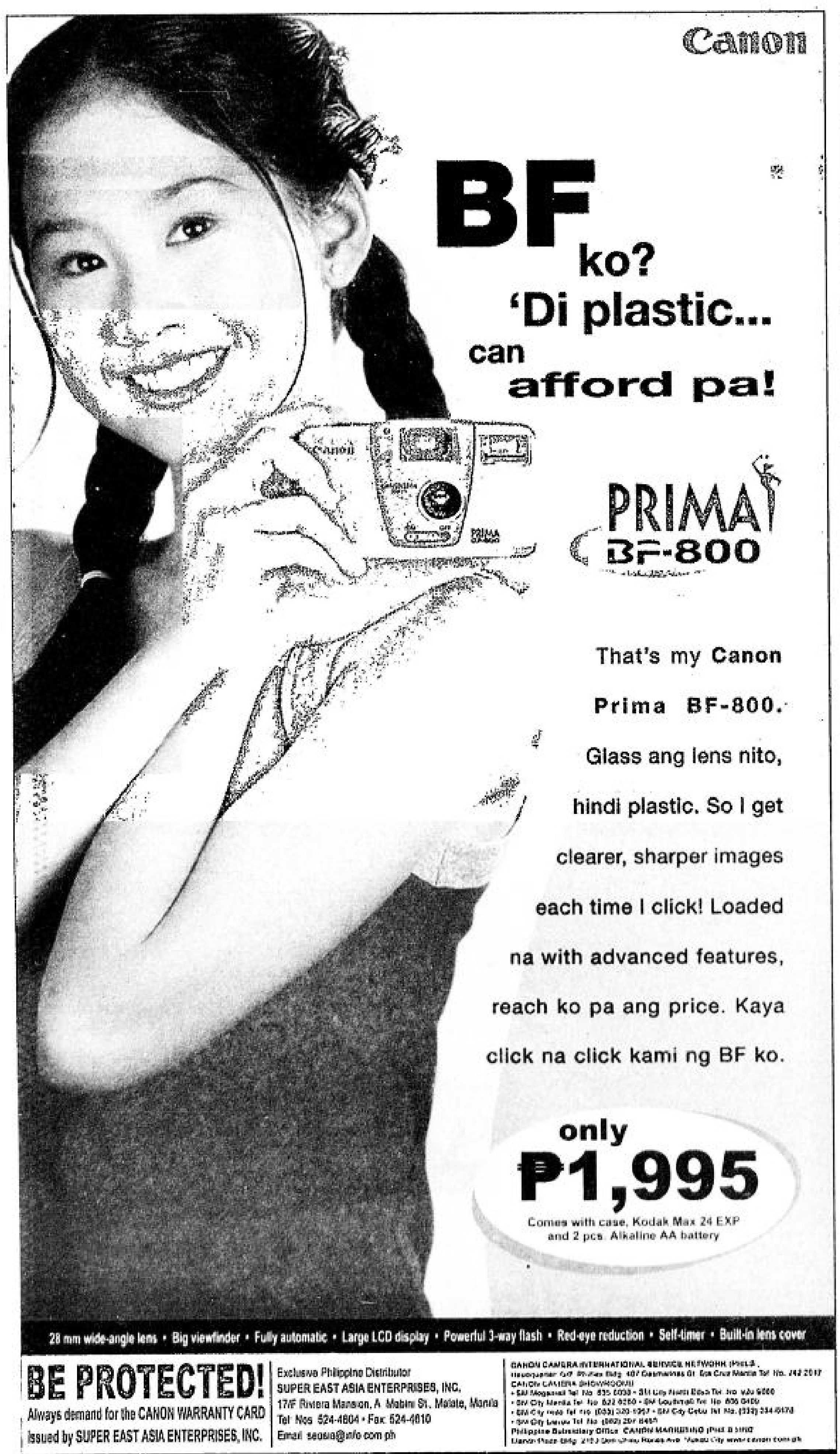
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Shell, Eastern raise gasoline prices anew

PETROLEUM prices continued to climb after Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. raised the prices of its gasoline by 55 centavos and of diesel and kerosene by 39 centavos per liter effective 10 p.m. Saturday. Prices of liquefied petroleum gas also went up by P1.70 per kilogram.

New player Eastern Petroleum Corp. said prices of its gasoline and kerosene rose by 55 centavos per liter and of diesel by 35 centavos beginning at 5 a.m. today.

Consumers would be paying P18.70 more for an 11-kg cylinder of Shellane, which now costs between P314 and P318.

Other new players said they would defer decision on the matter until after Petron Corp. shall have made its move. Petron said it had nothing to announce as yet, although industry sources said it would move prices today.

Pilipinas Shell's and Eastern Petroleum's announcements came after consumer welfare advocate Raul Concepcion said prices were expected to go up by as much as 80 centavos per liter due to higher costs of crude between January and December.

Average Dubai crude prices shot up by $2.14 per barrel to $27.87 in January from $25.73 in December.

Meanwhile, the peso weakened by 8 centavos from P53.49 to the dollar in December to P53.57 last month.

Roberto Kanapi, Shell general manager for external affairs, said in a telephone interview the cost of diesel and kerosene went up by more than the firm's price hike of 39 centavos.

"We prefer to effect increases in smaller increments. Maybe there could be another price adjustment at the end of February," Kanapi said.

Eastern chair Fernando Martinez said product costs actually went up by P1.10 per liter for gasoline and 80 centavos for diesel.

"But we can't pass these on to customers entirely, we have to shoulder part of the costs," Martinez said. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

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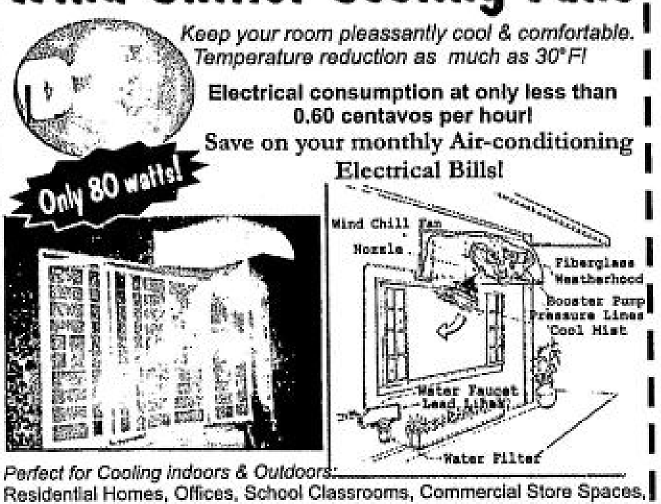

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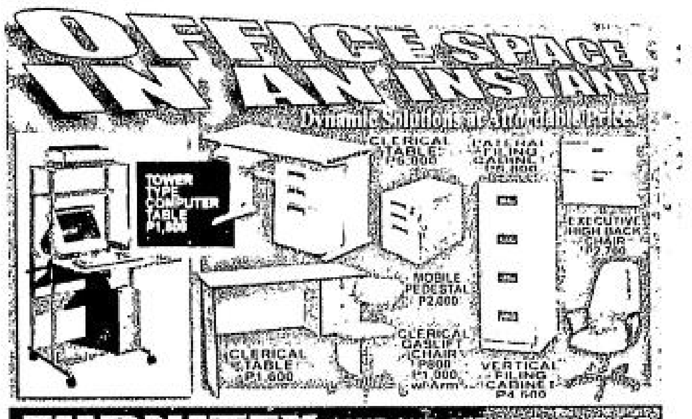
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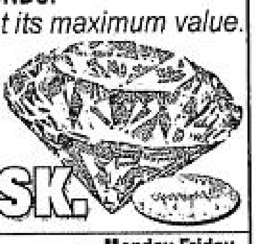

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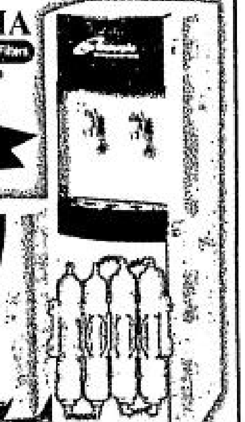

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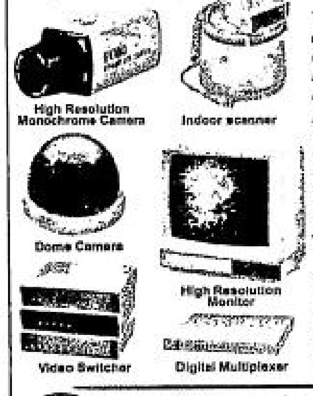

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Palace downplays visit of top US Army general

From page A1

for post-war operations.

Rafael Mariano, chair of the militant farmers group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, reacted to news of Shinseki's visit by urging Congress to conduct an urgent review of both the Mutual Defense Treaty and the Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement.

"The US is dragging the Filipino people to its unjust war against Iraq," Mariano said.

He also maintained that President Macapagal-Arroyo's trip to Kuwait was not "a show of concern" but "another open display of puppetry to the US."

The President has said her administration will support military action against Iraq if it is authorized by the United Nations.

If Washington goes to war against Iraq without UN authorization, Golez said yesterday, the government would convene a national security meeting to determine what position to take.

He said the government would "discuss its options" after US Secretary of State Colin Powell presents American evidence before the UN Security Council on Iraq's supposed violations of UN resolutions providing for its disarmament.

The Cabinet oversight committee on internal security will assess the results of the UN Security Council meeting after Powell's presentation, Golez said.

In a separate interview at the Villamor Air Base, the presidential adviser said: "We always anticipate what we may consider the worst scenario and that is there could be an outbreak of war."

No support

In the Senate, the so-called Wednesday group of senators cautioned the Macapagal administration against backing any US initiative without UN sanction.

Sen. Francisco Pangilinan said the Philippines should not support a US-initiated strike on Iraq unless such action was backed by a UN resolution.

"We should exhaust all peaceful means to resolve the dispute. It is in the interest of the Philippines to oppose war in Iraq," Pangilinan said.

Pangilinan, along with Senators Joker Arroyo, Noli de Castro, Ralph Recto and Manuel Villar late last week filed a resolution calling on the government to act with prudence on the Iraq issue.

"A war in Iraq will create more hardships for the Philippines. We will also endanger the lives of our OFWs," Pangilinan said.

Pangilinan said their group would push floor discussions on the resolution to spark a national debate on the Philippine's position on the US-Iraq war.

Arroyo warned that it would be unconstitutional for the President to allow the US to launch attacks on Iraqi targets from anywhere in the Philippines, since the Charter renounces war as a policy of the state.

Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr., who resigned as foreign secretary last year over policy differences with the President, said the government must limit its course of action: it must be "within the national interest, within our means" and only with the sanction of the United Nations. *With a report from Agnes E. Donato*

Pinoys want RP neutrality, SWS survey shows

By Dennis M. Arroyo

FILIPINOS believe that war on Iraq will make the economy worse, and will increase the danger the nation faces from terrorism. The public also prefers that the country stay neutral in the conflict. These are some of the findings from a survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations.

In the Nov. 15-Dec. 2, 2002 national poll, the respondents were asked: "How do you think a war of the US with Iraq would affect the Philippine economy?"

The results: 9 percent said the economy would be better, 20 percent the same as it is now, and 71 percent said the economy would be worse.

Another question was: "If the Philippines supports the US in a military action against Iraq, for example by allowing American forces to pass through the Philippines, do you think the danger of terrorist attacks in the Philippines will increase, decrease, or stay the same as at present?"

The results: 12 percent said there would be less danger, 15 percent said the danger would be about the same, and 72 percent said there would be more danger.

A third question asked: "US President George W. Bush wants to invade Iraq as soon as possible, to prevent it from using, against the US, weapons of mass destruction, such as nuclear bombs etc. which he alleges Iraq has. He has asked for UN support, but says that he might not be able to wait long before attacking Iraq. In your opinion, which of the following is the best thing for the Philippines to do?"

The results: five percent said they support a US campaign even without UN support, 17 percent said they would support a campaign if there was UN authorization, eight percent said they opposed the US-led campaign, and 70 percent said they preferred that the country stay neutral.

GMA off to Kuwait . . .

From page A1

"So far, on the surface, it looks calm," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said in a teleconference with Malacañang reporters. But "there is the possibility that a state of emergency will be declared in Kuwait in the next few days."

"That's the talk in coffee shops," said Bunye, who arrived in Kuwait yesterday morning and was able to talk immediately with Filipino waiters at the Marriott Hotel.

The President left yesterday morning for a whirlwind visit to Kuwait to check on evacuation plans for workers who could be at risk if war breaks out in neighboring Iraq.

"This is unprecedented, for a President to go in the middle of a crisis, so when I was invited to come along, I agreed. I wanted to be part of history," said Rep. Apolinario Lozada Jr., part of Ms Macapagal's small entourage.

"I think the most important thing there is the action really speaks louder ... even if there will be nothing substantial that will be discussed with the government of Kuwait," Lozada said.

The President will meet with Emir Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah in formal talks early today, before presiding over a "regional command conference" with Philippine ambassadors and labor attachés to the Middle East. She will then meet the Emir again for a late lunch.

She was expected to meet some 700 representatives of the Filipino community late last night.

The President is expected to be back in Manila tomorrow, in time for a weekly Cabinet meeting.

She is also to address overseas workers' families at the Philippine Trade and Training Center in Manila at 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

Presidential assurance

Lozada said the main purpose of the hasty trip was to reassure the workers in the area.

"This is just really giving assurance to our people in the Middle East, especially in Kuwait, which is adjacent to Iraq, that the government and the people in the Philippines have not really forgotten them," Lozada said.

"The most important thing ... is the presence of the President before the 60,000 Filipinos in Kuwait, which also would be interpreted positively by our people in the rest of the Middle East," Lozada said.

In a separate interview, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo said the President decided to go to Kuwait herself because "the President's role is to meet with our people."

"These [OCWs] are our heroes. Don't you think it's right for the President to visit them?" Romulo said.

In another interview, National Security Adviser Roilo Golez said the President will "see for herself our preparedness plan ... as a good mother of her family."

Ambassadors' meet

The President's meeting with ambassadors and labor attachés will discuss contingency measures for the 1.4 million overseas workers in the troubled region.

"All the ambassadors will gather in Kuwait, on my instructions for a regional command conference on preparedness measures," Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said.

Ople said Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas would assist the President in the conference.

He ruled out a side trip to Saudi Arabia because the royal family is currently not in the capital city of Riyadh.

Initial plans that called for the President to visit other Middle East countries fell through because of the apparent lack of time.

"After consulting with the President on this matter, I instructed our Middle East ambassadors to proceed to Kuwait to brief the President and to discuss with her the overall situation in the Middle East and to brief her on the status of the country's contingency plans," Ople said.

The ambassadors and charges d'affaires who will brief the President are the country's envoys to Egypt, Iran, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Ople said that reports from the diplomatic posts in the Middle East show that Filipinos in the region are "generally calm."

Urgent mission

Ms Macapagal's departure reflected her mission's urgency. Arriving at Villamor Air Base, she walked briskly on a red carpet, escorted by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Dionisio Santiago, to a waiting 12-seat chartered Challenger jet. She smiled and waved to the crowd and then left without any farewell remarks.

The presidential party took off at about 9:13 a.m. for the 12-hour flight to Kuwait.

Ms Macapagal was accompanied by Lozada, chair of the House foreign relations committee, and Brig. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, commander of the Presidential Security Group.

Present during the simple send-off ceremonies were Vice President Teofisto Guingona Jr., Romulo, Golez, Press Secretary Hernani Braganza and top military officials.

On the eve of her two-day trip, the President said the government was ready to carry out a voluntary evacuation of some of the country's workers in the Middle East, including about 60,000 in Kuwait who are considered at risk if war breaks out.

"Our consideration would be to ensure that as much as possible, no worker loses his job, and we will maintain our smooth ties with countries in the Middle East," she had said in her weekly radio address. *With a report from AP*

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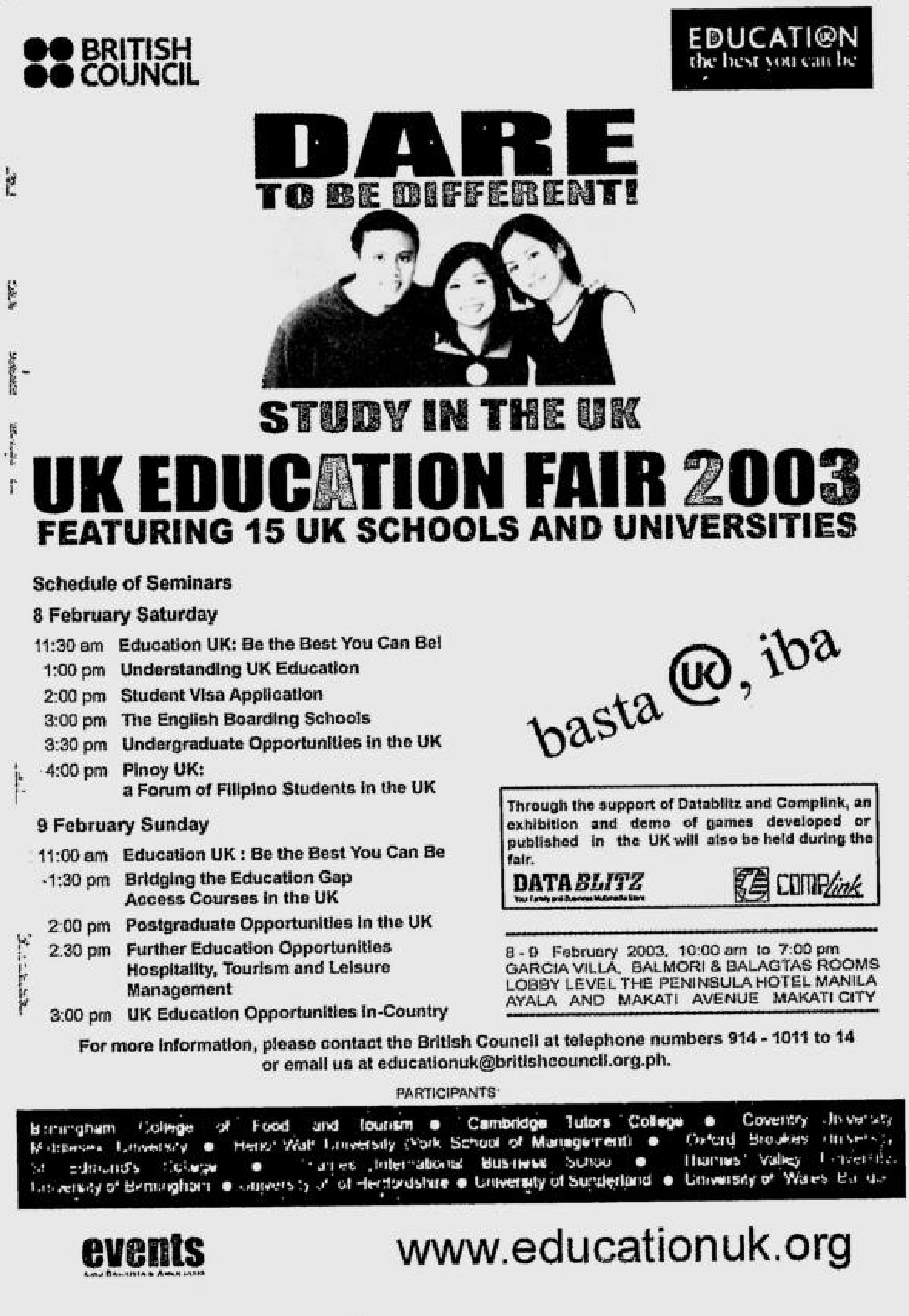
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US war on Iraq to disrupt RP economic growth

From page A1

But the downside is that growth is taking place at the wrong time. We are facing a war in Iraq and that war is certain to disrupt the momentum of sustainable growth. The immediate effects of war include an oil price shock; the mass evacuation of much of the 1.6 million Filipino overseas workers in the Middle East, resulting in the contraction of foreign exchange remittances that keep the economy afloat during economic downturns; and the possible flare-up of terrorist attacks in sympathetic response to an attack on Iraq, although such attacks may not necessarily be coordinated with Iraq's war effort.

The impressive economic growth amid the shadow of the gathering storm over Iraq follows the boom and bust cycle of the economy, which seems to be regularly dislocated by unforeseen events at the time it rides the boom.

For example, when the economy was posting more than 7-percent growth rate during the Aquino administration in 1989, the most dangerous coup knocked the economy back to zero growth. The Ramos administration engineered a remarkable and sustained economic recovery, hitting more than 6-percent growth and putting the country on the edge of being a new Asian economic miracle, but the Asian financial crisis of mid-1997 threw the economy off the rails.

In the event of an American-led invasion, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq will be too preoccupied with defending his country and with the survival of his regime to bother about strategic coordination with terrorist groups linked to the al-Qaida network. In the first place, the United States, despite its high-technology-assisted intelligence apparatus, has never established direct links between Iraq and al-Qaida. Even less certain is Iraq's connection to and responsibility for the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States.

Oil shock

Optimistic scenarios try to paint a reassuring picture of the oil shock. They point to the experience in the 1991 Gulf War, when oil prices shot up in the immediate aftermath of the allied invasion of Iraq, but it did not take long for prices to drop and for an oil glut to develop. In today's Iraq crisis, however, oil supply is aggravated by the cut in oil production by Venezuela, which is rocked by a political crisis threatening to topple the government of President Hugo Chavez.

One can only hope that the optimistic scenario, highlighted by US military planners, i.e., a short war running for weeks not over several months, plays out, as this would abbreviate the duration of the oil price shock. But war, especially conflicts with international dimensions like the Iraq crisis, tends to disobey best-case scenarios.

The trip of President Macapagal-Arroyo to Kuwait to demonstrate her concern for the 1.6 overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) in the Middle East underlines the grave threat facing Filipinos there *(See story on Page A1)*. The trip may be good public relations, but it will not do much to ensure the safety of OFWs or the orderly evacuation from imminent danger zones.

Unlike in the 1991 Gulf War, which was of short duration, a new war staged in Iraq is likely to unleash weapons of mass destruction—notably, chemical and biological—which the US and Britain claim are hidden by Iraq.

Security experts, including the authoritative International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, do not rule out the unleashing by Saddam of germ and chemical weapons on invading troops as a desperate action to save his regime or to avert defeat.

There are only 121 Filipinos in Iraq, most of them employed by international organizations. It has the fewest concentration of Filipinos. But there are large concentrations of Filipinos in at least three countries that are expected to be attacked by Iraq in the event of an invasion—Kuwait, with 60,000 Filipinos; Israel, 40,000; and Turkey, 1,500. The United States is building up forces which are using bases and facilities in Kuwait and Turkey, both bordering Iraq, as invasion platforms.

In these places alone, evacuation of Filipinos fleeing weapons of mass destruction, which are likely to be used by Iraq, as well as the invading forces, would be a nightmare in scale. The jobs of the rest of Filipinos in the Middle East would be put at risk in a war that runs longer than the best-case scenarios. Any expansion of the theater of war in the Middle East, let alone terrorist attacks in America or European cities whose governments support an American military strike on Iraq can only spark large-scale evacuation of Filipinos.

Home front

On the home front, there are signals of unrest from the Islamic community. A recent anti-war rally, joined mainly by Filipino Muslims, has warned that an invasion of Iraq would provoke terrorist attacks in solidarity with Iraq along the religion fault line and in protest of the administration's support for President George W. Bush's combative policy on Iraq.

The warnings might be exaggerated, since the possible source of these attacks—the Abu Sayyaf—has been considerably reduced as a terrorist threat. Over the past 12 months, the Armed Forces have enhanced their capacity to combat terrorist threats. Unlike the US military, the Philippine military faces enemies who strike from the dark. We will be fighting terrorist phantoms, but in Iraq, the United States and its allies have defined a territory to attack—Iraq—on which it can demonstrate the technological power of modern armies to annihilate identifiable enemies.

Thus, in the preparation for the war in Iraq, the United States has wiggled itself out of a borderless war with mobile and unseen enemies (such as the al-Qaida networks). But such an operation cannot smoke out phantom terrorists. The Afghanistan war was a demonstration of US military technology, but it failed to kill Osama bin Laden.

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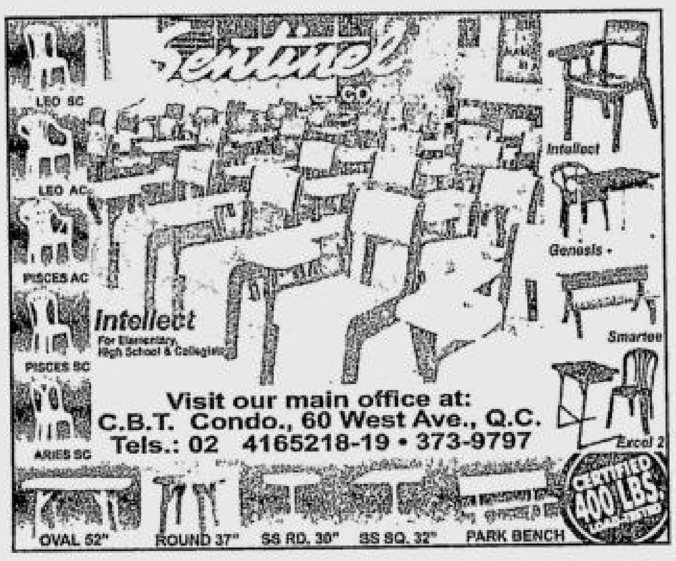

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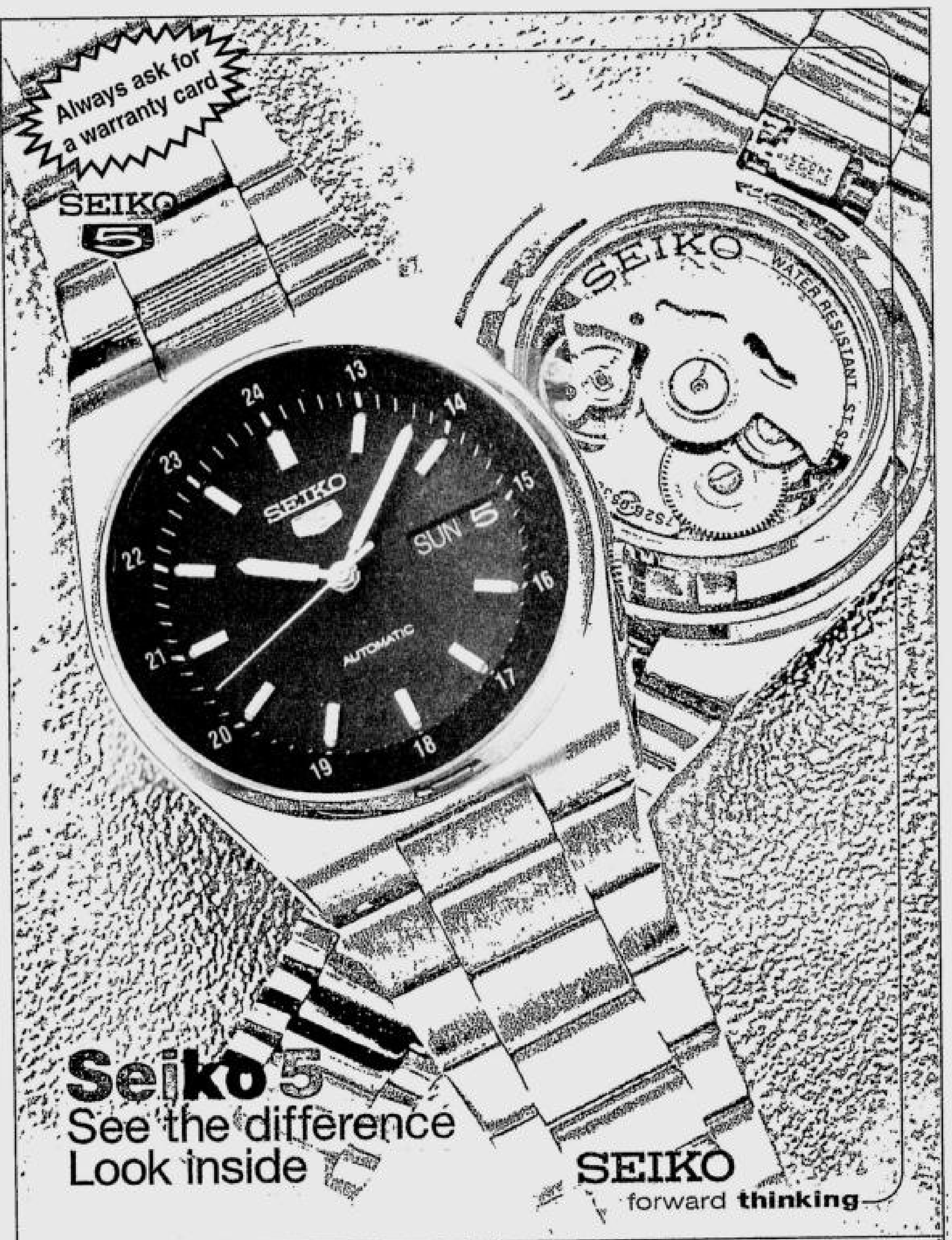

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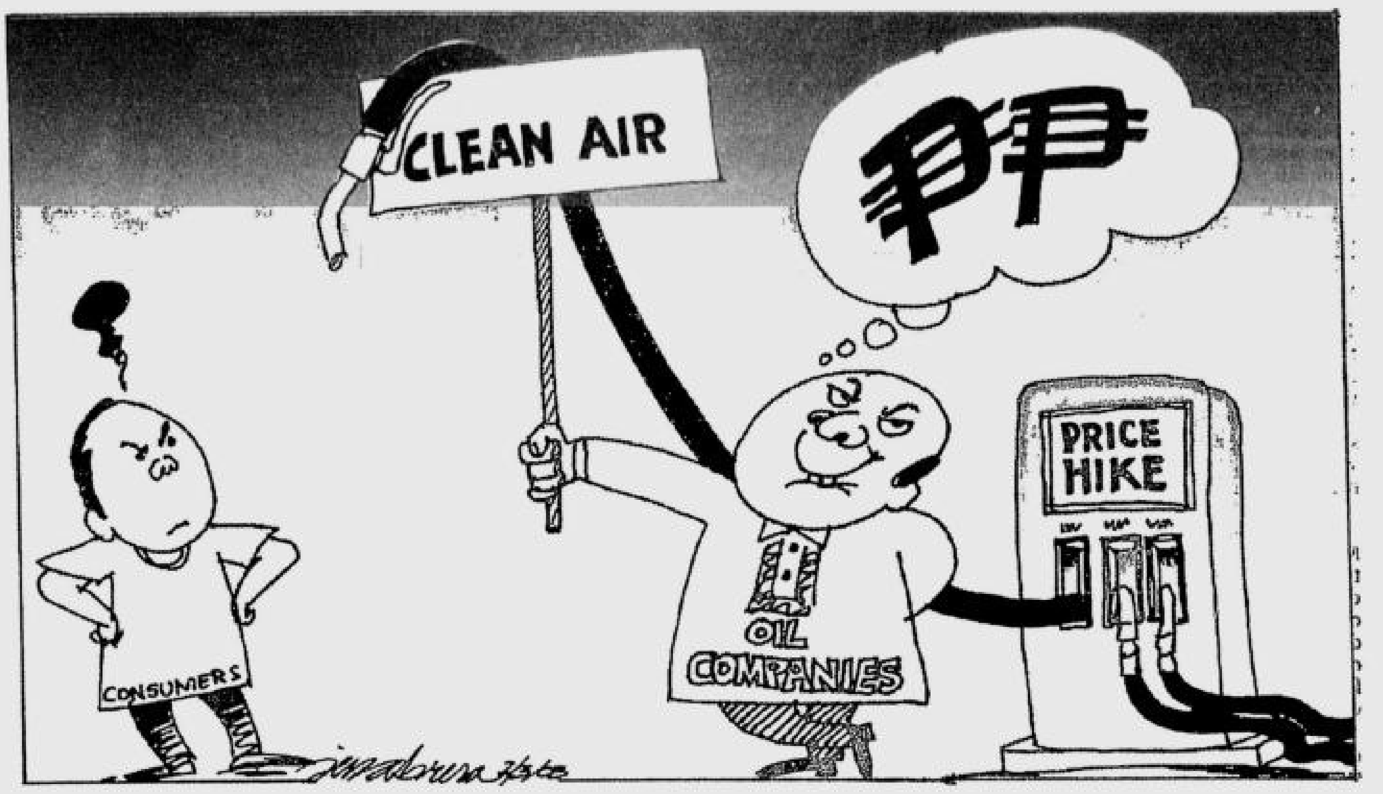

The world's English

EDITORIAL

LAST Wednesday, a first-term, second-generation President addressed a largely sympathetic audience and came dangerously close to declaring war. We do not mean US President George W. Bush, whose State of the Union address drew yet another line in the sand against Iraq's Saddam Hussein. We mean President Macapagal-Arroyo, whose keynote speech at the Far Eastern University's anniversary rites beat the drums for another cycle of the language wars.

Or at least that is how the critics of her new English-language policy have reacted to it.

"Until Congress enacts a law mandating Filipino as the language of instruction, I am directing the Department of Education to return English as the primary medium of instruction, provided some subjects will still be taught in Filipino," the President said.

That proviso notwithstanding, the critics have rightly seen the new policy as launching a new phase in the on-again, off-again struggle to fashion a truly national language.

The President claims long-term reasons for returning English—first taught in the country a hundred years ago—to its pride of place in the education system. But she is taking a decidedly short-term approach: she is banking on congressional inactivity to sneak the reform in. The Constitution provides that, "Subject to provisions of law and as the Congress may deem appropriate, the Government shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Filipino as a medium of official communication and as language of instruction in the educational system."

Since 1988, when Congress was restored, no such law has been enacted. The President wants to use this uncertain window to "reverse" the "decline" in English literacy that the Philippines has suffered in the last three decades or so.

We support the President's initiative. If anything, we think it does not go far enough. We would rather the President waged a campaign to convince Congress it was in the country's best interests to forego such an enabling law.

Unable to resist taking a cheap shot, deposed President Joseph Estrada immediately denounced Ms Macapagal's new policy. The country's foremost practitioner of so-called carabao English said "the masses were able to identify" with him because of his use of Taglish, the familiar mix of Tagalog and English. "We'd rather be practical than purists," the populist former town mayor said. "The best language is still what the people can easily understand."

This is specious thinking, because it assumes a very small world. It assumes that all Filipinos live in a small town, much like San Juan in Estrada's day, and the language issue is reduced to whether the community identifies itself with the local leader. It assumes that, in today's highly competitive, increasingly inter-dependent world, Filipinos can afford to loosen our already tenuous grip on English.

It isn't only a question of commerce, although as the number of call center job vacancies proves, there is certainly money to be made in English. It is also and chiefly a question of survival, because like it or not we still live in the English era.

"It's a world reality that English is the main language," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said last week, by way of explaining the President's remarks.

A quick look at the British Council's website shows the true dimensions of that reality. "English is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music and advertising." The site also offers compelling statistics:

- English enjoys official or special status in at least 75 countries with a total population of over 2 billion.
- Over two-thirds of the world's scientists read in English.
- 80 percent of the world's electronically stored information is in English.
- Around 700,000 people come to learn English in the United Kingdom each year, in the process spending as much as £1 billion.

That last item deserves a second look, because in the last several years South Korea has come to look at the Philippines as a cost-effective way to successfully learn English. By one estimate, there are 10,000 Koreans in the country, learning their ABCs.

Estrada and his kind may not see it, but obviously these language students are on to something.

OK of absentee voting bill killed Cha-cha

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

SO the absentee voting bill has been passed by Congress, and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will surely sign it into law. But can it be implemented without cheating, a feat in which Filipinos have proven themselves to be experts at? The legislators themselves are not so sure. The Commission on Elections has admitted it cannot safeguard the votes of overseas Filipinos. How can it? It cannot even safeguard the votes from a neighboring municipality, how can it safeguard votes coming from across the seas?

So, what's going to happen is that while we spend billions of pesos to modernize voting and counting in the Philippines to make elections clean and honest, the votes from overseas Filipinos (anywhere between 3 to 6 million) can not only spell the difference between winning or losing but also can make the elections dirty and dishonest.

But there is a silver lining behind the dark clouds. And the last laugh is on the politicians who, by pushing the absentee voting bill, seek to curry favor with the overseas Filipinos. It is that the passage of the absentee voting bill makes the movement for Charter change—ironically, being pushed by the same politicians who pushed the absentee voting bill—already obsolete, finished, kaput. And especially the push to change the system of government to parliamentary—Congress can no longer push that without incurring the ire of Filipinos abroad who should benefit from the absentee voting bill (AVB).

Election lawyer Romulo B. Macalintal laughs at the comedy of errors committed by our politicians. He wrote:

"The AVB provides for the right of qualified Filipinos abroad to vote only for the positions of president, vice president, senators and party list. However, the moment the form of government is changed to parliamentary, there would be no more president, vice president or senators to be elected or voted for by the Filipinos abroad under the AVB. It would be impractical to allow them to vote only for the party list.

"Under a parliamentary form of government, the assemblymen (or members of Parliament, MPs) elected by district shall elect from among themselves their prime minister. Hence, Filipinos abroad cannot participate in the voting for district representatives and more so in the election of the prime minister because the AVB is intended only for the election of national elective officials.

"In other words, the AVB will be meaningless if Congress pushes through with its plan to amend the Constitution with the primary objective of changing the form of government from presidential to parliamentary."

Filipinos abroad who were promised by our legislators such voting rights, said Macalintal, will rise in rightful indignation if, after having been assured of their suffrage, Congress will practically remove or take back that right because of the change in the form of government. Principal objects of their wrath will be the politicians who pushed the Cha-cha to shift to a parliamentary form.

"It is a case of 'now you have it, now you don't' because it would appear that even before our Filipinos abroad could enjoy and exercise their rights under the AVB, such right is now in danger of being rendered useless and meaningless as there would be no more elective positions to be voted for under the proposed parliamentary form of government. *Pinasasabik-sabik lang sila, wala rin pala.*"

* * *

Doesn't the impeachment campaign against Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco, and the pressure on Congress to impeach her—including the show of force by Makati's perfumed set in the House of Representatives, "glaring and throwing dagger looks" at the congressmen—smack of persecution? This is a free country of course, and Congress should always be open to the public, not only to the urban poor but also to the landed perfumed ones. If they choose to glare at the congressmen and become cross-eyed or at least have eyestrain, that is their lookout. Maybe that's the natural way they look, having been accustomed to it because of looking that way at their husbands or their househelp, but it is understandable why the politicians are suddenly having stage fright.

Anyway, they are friends of Jose Concepcion, the guru of Namfrel and their neighbor and barangay captain in their exclusive barangay Forbes Park (Concepcion could have made *hakot* of them for the hearing) and they're doing the glaring to show their unity with their captain. And speaking of Namfrel, shouldn't Congress look more closely into the motive of Namfrel in pushing Tancangco's impeachment? Isn't there a conflict of interest here? Namfrel is pushing for its own preferences in voting machines and voting and counting system. Tancangco is not convinced that the machines will ensure clean and honest elections if the voters' rosters are not cleansed first. If the same flying and ghost voters are still on the lists, then we cannot have honest elections even if the expensive machines count their votes quickly and accurately. So Namfrel wants her out.

If only people, and especially her critics, will listen to her, people will understand Tancangco. But her tragedy is that nobody wants to listen to her. They don't want to listen to her explanations. It's much easier to jump to conclusions: "Ah, she has been bribed to favor another system. Off with her head!"

Perfume, especially if worn by femme fatales like Mata Hari and Delilah, usually drugs unsuspecting males into doing foolish things (even bishops are not immune to it). Maybe it is fortunate for us that our congressmen, having been used to the perfume of GROs, do not readily succumb to the perfume of Makati's perfumed set.

Breakthrough

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

WHILE the votes in the German polls were being counted last September, everyone kept commenting on TV that it set a record for the longest time before the winner was known. The reason for it was that Gerhardt Schroeder and Edmund Stoiber were battling each other neck and neck. The polls closed at 5 p.m. and hours later, they still could not establish a definite trend. It was only around midnight that they did, the Schroeder's red-green coalition pulling through by the narrowest of margins and forcing Stoiber to concede.

That was the second thing that bowled me over about the German elections—the first was that they could not comprehend the concept of cheating—which was that they could not comprehend the concept of a winner in elections being known days or even weeks or months later. Their concept of a record delay was seven hours! The winner was normally known a couple of hours after the polling stations closed.

That of course is unheard of in this country. Courtesy of the ballot box, which entails a cumbersome registration and verification process, the physical transportation of the votes to the counting centers, and their being read one by one, the winners could only be known after many a sleepless night. And only after the place was littered with corpses from people trying to attack and defend the ballot boxes.

I've always argued for junking the ballot box on the very basic ground that delay equals cheating. That is an obvious equation. Any process that is as cumbersome as this will invite cheating as resolutely as anyone wearing the sign "I love Arabs" will invite mayhem in Jerusalem. Of course it will also invite acts of bravery or heroism, like the spectacle of public school teachers embracing the ballot boxes and risking death—or finding it—to protect them from goons. But the net effect is unsavory, the nation ending up being the most victimized by it.

Consequently, I've always plugged for the modernization of the electoral process, and have railed against the inability of the Comelec to do so. Luzviminda Tangcanco in particular may not escape blame for it. But comes now a group that has developed a system that stands not just to modernize Philippine elections but to revolutionize them altogether. That is the MegaGroup of Computer Companies headed by Rafael Garcia III. They've devised an electronic system that covers the entire range of the voting process, from registration, to voting, to counting, to recounting, and makes voting a veritable joy.

They call it *Botong Pinoy*.

They made a demonstration last week at the Ateneo de Naga, and the results were awesome. The system to begin with makes it impossible for anyone to register twice, removing the bane of flying voters completely. Registration entails having yourself photographed digitally and pressing your left and right thumb on a box.

The actual voting is not unlike going to a Metrobank ATM. A teleprompter verbally advises you what to do. You can choose whatever language you want from a list by touching the screen. Then you just keep touching "Next" after you've finished a page. The beauty of it is that the pictures of the candidates are displayed on the screen along with their names. All you have to do, for example, when voting for senators, is to touch their pictures and they are automatically listed down. If you don't want to vote for all 12 senators, you can always press "Next" after you're through. That is true for all the candidates down to the lowest local level.

The counting is instantaneous. The votes are sent automatically to the central system as soon as they are made. The system can count a million votes in a second, so all it takes to count 40 million voters is 40 seconds! That eliminates completely *dagdag-bawas*, where people add or erase zeroes from the physical tallies.

As an added precaution, the votes will be backed up by a computer printout with a barcode to make sure it is the only one of its kind. You can always ask for a copy of your vote, making it impossible for a candidate you voted for in your district to register a zero in the tally. You have proof of it.

I tried the system myself. I became the guinea pig in the demonstration at the Ateneo de Naga. Registration took all of two minutes. Part of the reason for it is that I am reasonably computer literate, and more importantly do not have a fear of technology, which can be a problem for other people. But I will come to that later on. My picture was taken, I pressed my thumbprints on the box, and filled up the usual data sheet—name, date of birth, place of birth, etc. That was it, I was now a registered voter. I was ready to vote.

The teleprompter asked me what language of instruction I wanted, and I chose English. After pressing "Next," the pictures of some ten presidential candidates with their names below appeared on the screen. A wild applause erupted behind me when I touched the picture of Raul Roco. Next the vice president and then the senators. I chose only five senators and pressed "Next." The teleprompter asked me if I had closed my votes at five, and touched the "Yes" box. Again, I took only all of two minutes. I would imagine someone less familiar with the technology, or more intimidated by it, might take longer.

Now, here's the fun part. They asked me to register again, and I did. The computer said sorry, there was already another person by that name and thumbprint. I understand that in another demo someone registered a second time without glasses and wearing a fake mustache. Same response: there was no getting around the thumbprints. I tried voting twice as well, upon instructions. The computer answered in a flash: "You have already voted."

Impressive as hell. *(To be concluded)*

Solons should vote to return report to committee

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE VOTING scheduled for tomorrow on the House justice committee report on the impeachment complaint against Comelec Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco has become high drama for the entire nation. The eyes of the citizens are on how the House will vote on this report that seeks to throw out the 80 pages of complaint backed up by 200 documents that include COA reports, Comelec records and the Supreme Court decision voiding Tancangco's P6.4-billion contract with Photokina for voters' registration. The complaint was filed by 23 individual petitioners and 19 people's organizations.

In the eyes of many citizens, the way the justice committee handled the report has been, to quote Liberal Party president Florencio Abad, "highly subjective and whimsical." By a vote of 36 against 16, the justice committee ruled that the issue of Tancangco's impeachment is "political" and therefore subject to the "discretion" of each committee member. Unfortunately the 36 exercised their "discretion" to throw it out without looking at the complaints seriously or justifying their stand beyond Rep. Agapito Aquino's sweeping statement that the charges are "mere conjectures based on suspicions and not actual facts."

* * *

Rep. Eduardo Nachura argued during last Monday's plenary debates on that report that there should be little room for exercise of "discretion" here since House rules spell out very clearly the two-step process: the "preliminary determination of the facts" as recited in the citizens' complaint against Tancangco, and the formal investigation of the impeachment charges. There is now a strong sentiment among some House members to vote to return that report to the justice committee and press for a real investigation that the citizens' complaint deserves. I hope majority of the legislators will support this clamor, for as Abad put it, it is not just a legal or political issue but a question as well of right versus wrong, of good governance versus graft and corruption and culpable violation of the Constitution.

Bacolod Rep. Monico Puentebella, the lead sponsor of the impeachment resolution, also correctly stressed that what is at stake in the voting on a "very impeachable commissioner" is the very credibility of the House.

* * *

The votes of 73 out of 219 members are needed to reject that committee report and call for investigation. Getting those 73 votes seems tough, for ranged against the small band of intrepid legislators pushing for investigation is the collective might of Tancangco's backers, which include two powerful religious sects, the Jesus is Lord Movement and the Iglesia ni Cristo, and a major political party, the Nationalist People's Coalition. There is also the Comelec's power to coerce the legislators by its life and death powers over the pending cases before the Comelec of 80 mayors and vice-mayors belonging to 46 districts. The commissioners are said to be broadly hinting about a quid pro quo.

Many citizens, however, view this as a crusade for good governance and a historic opportunity for the legislators to be on the "right side of history." Earlier this column said that given the powerful forces supporting Tancangco, it would take a miracle to get those 73 votes, but miracles do happen, and maybe there are 73 or even more idealistic legislators in the House.

* * *

How the House members handle this case will impact directly on whether the citizens would entrust to them the delicate task of amending the Constitution. So much is truly at stake here beyond the fate of Tancangco. They should vote to investigate the complaint seriously.

Representatives Oscar Rodriguez of Pampanga and Laurence Wacnang of Kalinga gave another reason for investigation: it should also be welcomed by Tancangco, as it would give her a chance to face the committee and resolve "whether she indeed committed the alleged offenses that she admitted to in good faith."

* * *

I read the 12-page justice committee report, its answer to the 280-page citizens' complaint, and followed closely the plenary debates. I note that the report was very thinly written and chose to dwell more on the manner of voting rather than to explain the members' stand on the very serious charges raised. It's the report that's insufficient in substance, not the complaint. Interestingly, the committee members voted on the report referendum-style, even though House rules do not provide for its use, as Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez pointed out. He lamented that the members were so liberal in this score, and yet, in treating the litany of serious charges against Tancangco, they became so strict, ignoring them because the preliminary stage didn't warrant investigation.

* * *

The committee report submitted to the plenary body with the signatures of only 34 out of 62 members—perhaps an indication that many members were not convinced of its wisdom and justice. During the debates, Rep. Arthur Defensor queried committee chair Marcelo Libanan on the anomalous P6.4-billion contract with Photokina that Tancangco entered into, which was later voided by the Supreme Court; the P199 million in cash advances for a mapping project released by her to her staffers (including her secretary and her sister-in-law) and to unbonded contractual employees, the bulk of which remains unliquidated, and other charges. Defensor got Libanan to admit that none of these charges were subjected to any investigation. Pressing for it, Defensor stated that "we would be able to put things clearly and lay the culpability of the respondent on the table if we give the committee a chance to investigate this complaint."

Returning it to the committee for investigation is the just and sensible thing to do.

Back to the future

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo wants English restored as the primary medium of instruction in the country.

That's about the best piece of news that has come to us here in the hinterlands in recent times.

Perhaps very few among Tagalog-speaking people realized that the constitutional provision imposing Pilipino or Filipino as the medium of instruction in schools was seen by us non-Tagalogs as a rather oppressive, divisive and alienating law.

The more extreme view saw it as another attempt of the "Christian government" at "neo-colonization" with the corollary intent of pushing ethnic and tribal communities, limited already as they are in their access to sources of information, further down the pit of illiteracy and ignorance, from which the possibility of social mobility would be next to impossible.

This is ironic of course, considering that a primary rational behind the law was the idea that we needed a "common language" to unite us as a people.

But we are as divided, if not more so.

This was almost instantaneously evident in the reaction interviews conducted by a television network soon after the President issued the order Wednesday during her speech in an educational institution.

Those interviewed were as usual, divided in their opinions, although there were more of those who objected than those in favor.

But then again, the interviews were conducted in the streets of Metro Manila. So what else could we expect?

Ironically too, the point raised by at least two respondents, a student and a teacher, regarding the difficulty of teaching (and learning) Araling Panlipunan (Social Studies) in English, would be the very argument of non-Tagalog-speaking students and teachers against the use of Filipino; that aside from learning the subject matter, they would have to learn the language in which it was taught.

Believe me, at the risk of being tarred and feathered by so-called "nationalists," it is really much easier for us non-Tagalog speakers to love our country by learning about it in English.

Sometime ago, I had an interesting discussion with a well-known history professor of the University of the Philippines who was one of the lecturers in a conference on local history, namely because I had raised the problem of comprehending their lectures which were mostly in Filipino, the academic kind, delivered before a generally Bisaya, Chabacano and Tausug-speaking audience.

He insisted on the same line of thinking, that is, that we as a people really needed a national language that would bind us all against all odds, and the rest of the country just had to learn it as a matter of patriotism.

I did not bother to point out the obvious, which was how our greatest nationalists spoke and wrote in languages not their own, and how present-day would-be patriots advance their causes with such terms as imperialismo, passismo, ideolohiya, etc. or Hispanized English words.

Instead I argued with another common line of thinking, that is, as even its staunchest advocates admit, Filipino lacks the vocabulary to translate scientific and political concepts, not to mention the humanities.

(I recall once listening to a member of the national language commission being interviewed on national television, who actually said that they were "in the process of finding words for scientific terms, for example, 'valve' is 'bulba'").

Precisely, the professor said, the national language was still developing and we had to give it time to come into its own.

But precisely also, I said, we didn't have the luxury of time in a fast developing world, with technology progressing not just by leaps and bounds but with speeds that blur.

And those who advocate Tagalog or Filipino as a common language, have no cause to worry, unless they have not been listening well.

Local movies and television have accomplished the objective of a common language so effortlessly that even the Abu Sayyaf in the jungles and the Badjao in his houseboat could speak Tagalog fluently.

Maybe over a period of time college students, ill-equipped in the English language after graduating from the elementary and secondary levels with Filipino as the medium of instruction, can learn to use such terms as "bulba" in their lab classes, but how do you take them to the logic and the wisdom, the music and the rhythm, the nuances of language and emotions, the intimations of the sublime, the glimpses of infinity, yes, the genius of Plato, Descartes, Dante, Milton, Emerson, Blake, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe, Homer—to name only a very few—when they have to run to a dictionary at every other paragraph?

Recently I browsed through a publication of a local college and wept.

To try to get to the bottom of this very sorry scheme of things, I dug up a copy of our high school paper, and I could only say a prayer of gratitude for all those wonderful teachers who taught us how to speak and write correct English to comprehend World and Philippine History and to behold the greatness of the men and women who directed the course of humankind through the ages, for the well-written and well-printed books they taught us from, and for growing up here in this place where you don't get ridiculed for being *pa-ingles-ingles*.

It was, in the truest sense, education for the future, which is now.

I can wish nothing less for the youth of Sulu and all non-Tagalog-speaking students.

In their behalf, Thank You, Madam President.

* * *

Comments to: nm19@my.smart.com.ph

War is always a defeat for humanity?

COMMENTARY

Dean Jorge Bocobo

"WAR is always a defeat for humanity." Jaime Cardinal Sin informs us, brandishing no less than Pope John Paul II on "good daughter" Gloria. His homily is well-taken, but I'm sure that the alter ego, Jaime Citizen Sin, might concede that there are exceptions. For example, the epic world war to defeat Nazi Germany and its dictator Adolf Hitler. That war was not a defeat for humanity, was it? That war was a defeat for the evil called fascism. Wasn't it?

The anti-Japanese war of that same era, including the Filipinos' brave war of resistance—was that a defeat for humanity? I'm sure the good Cardinal would admit it was a victory over the evil called Japanese militarism, which now the Japanese people fondly condemn, safe in a prosperous cocoon, their security tax-free under Pax Americana.

Was it a defeat for humanity when the United Nations went to bloody war in the 1950s, to save the Korea that today is a shining citadel of modern prosperity, against a communist North that is, by contrast, a pitiful ward of the world? No. That war was a defeat for the evil called communist totalitarianism. So the Korean War and the sacrifice of thousands of soldiers, including Filipinos, was a victory for humanity. Wasn't it?

How about the Philippine Revolution of 1896, our war of independence against Spain, was that also a defeat for humanity? After reigning much as the Taliban did in Afghanistan, the Spanish friars deserved to lose their precioussss 300-year-old Catholic theocracy over these benighted lands, though they kept the *encomienda*. Filipino nationalists waged a bloody war of revolution to establish Asia's first modern democratic republic. Then 600,000 Filipinos died defending that republic against America in the Philippine-American War. Were those wars a defeat for humanity too?

How about that long, Cold War between the US and the USSR which ended with the communist experiment in total failure, with its complete implosion economically, politically and ideologically in a conflict where Pope John Paul II was all his life, a combatant? The Pope was, in the words of Ronald Reagan when they met, "the greatest anti-Communist freedom fighter ever." The Pope happily accepted that verbal accolade and remunerated in kind. So, was the Cold War a defeat for humanity too? Was it not in fact, a historic victory for democracy, one that has even reanimated religion all over the old Soviet empire?

And how about the long-running war of attrition against the CPP/NPA, against the deadliest intellectual in Philippine history since Ferdinand Marcos, the communist leader Joma Sison? His old comrade-in-arms, Rolly Kintanar, was allegedly killed by Sison's assassins, but Joma first insisted that he didn't have anything to do with it. Yet when his complicity in the cold-blooded murder could no longer be denied, because evidently Ka Roger Rosal wanted to make sure the world knew who masterminded and ordered it, Sison pontificated to the media that the victim deserved what he got, perfuming and embroidering his political necrophilia with revolutionary *eck-eck*. To issue and execute a death penalty in the manner of a sovereign state must give Joma a high, the vicarious experience of being Josef Stalin or Mao Zedong, personally wielding absolute state power. His, is an absolutely sick fantasy, that must never come true, or humanity will surely be defeated in this country.

The government is forced to wage war, if Sison won't sign a peace accord, and steadfastly refuses to give up extortion, kidnapping and assassination as his principal means of livelihood. In far and fabled Utrecht, Sison leads the revolution atop indoor exercise machines connected to the Internet. But Sison has already lost. He has already earned the condemnation of history's vast audience, for he long ago strangled his own conscience in its bed and defeated the humanity that is inborn in each of us. Like Marcos, Joma will be a villain in history.

Cardinal Sin, please say that a just war to bring Sison and his cohorts to account for their crimes against humanity, in the name of humanity, won't be a defeat for humanity, but a victory for justice.

Of course, I understand what the Cardinal and the Pope "really" meant by "War is always a defeat for humanity." They meant that peace is an ideal all good men must subscribe to. And I do. But I offer this humble commentary as a polemic against blind, unconditional pacifism because, ironically, that is what facilitated the Holocaust, Hitler's genocidal war on the Jews, arguably the 20th century's greatest defeat for humanity, by preventing a preemptive strike on Hitler.

When British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain signed a nonaggression pact with Hitler in 1939, and Pope Pius XII blessed it by saying "Everything can be achieved by peace," how could they have known that Hitler's invasion of Poland was about to begin, and the Holocaust about to descend on Karol Wojtyla's homeland? How could they know 6 million Jews would perish before the world's greatest war would put the horror to an end, at the further cost of forty million human lives?

This history of war should not be ignored in debating Iraq, or Joma. The absolute lamentability of war is undeniable. And war is always a defeat for diplomacy. But the unavoidability of some war is equally undeniable. It is called, the just war, because there can be no peace without justice. Jesus said that, according to St. Matthew, the bravest apostle.

* * *

Comments to deanjbocobo@yahoo.com

Bold photos

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

THE LIFESTYLE section of the INQUIRER is meant to show to the public that there is more to life than terrorism, crimes, greedy politicians and all the other unpleasant things in our midst.

So every day, except Saturday, the readers are treated to articles and photos of social personalities, the arts, clothes, delicious food and the latest happenings in town. The Lifestyle section can be considered the "leisure and relaxation" part of the newspaper.

But a reader, Chats Billano, disagrees as far as the Jan. 24 issue of the section is concerned. She wrote: "I am writing again, this time to complain about the sexy pictures of *bomba* stars that are frequently featured in the Lifestyle section. I have written the editor of the section a few weeks ago to complain, but it seems he or she thinks these pictures are perfect for the INQUIRER. I think he *(sic)* is too preoccupied with *bomba* stars because he has been picturing them in succession including their pictures in various stages of undress.

"Today's issue (Jan. 24) especially is the worst. For a while, I thought I was looking at the pages of Playboy or Hustler magazine instead of the family newspaper. The introduction of the piece on Aubrey Miles itself says these pictures should not be published. I quote, 'utter her name and you get the complete attention of every hot-blooded male with hearing distance. Brandish her picture and boys go wild,' etc.

"In other words, these pictures are supposed to arouse men's baser instincts. I guess he has no respect for women because he keeps featuring them as sex objects. Don't get me wrong, Aubrey looks gorgeous, but these pictures should not be in the INQUIRER. It belongs to Playboy or that kind of magazine. I believe the sexy pictures are not needed to make a good interview.

"I read somewhere that the INQUIRER has bought Tumbok and another tabloid and plans to tame the pictures and articles there. Has management or the editor decided to move the sexy pictures to the INQUIRER instead?"

Advertorial

The article, which carried the head "And Miles to go before she sleeps," featured Aubrey Miles, one of many young nymphets who recently joined local filmdom's bandwagon of sexy flicks. The accompanying photos showed her wearing a push-up bra, nude thongs, hipster panties, stockings and garter belt manufactured by a local clothes company.

The caption of the half-page picture of her in black underwear read: "Bed of Roses. She seduces the camera in lace-trimmed thongs and floral print tank, both by HerBench." The whole composition was an "advertorial," or an advertisement made in editorial form.

The reader's complaint boils down to the issue of whether the photos in question constitute legitimate human photography (and therefore fit for publication in a family newspaper like the INQUIRER), or pornography (in which case they should not see print in this newspaper).

The usual response of reporters and photographers when asked about the dividing line between photography and pornography is: malice is in the beholder's eye. Depending on one's upbringing or cultural exposure, a nude photo is either a work of art or an obscenity. A seductive pose of a physically attractive woman may stir the hormones of one man. But not of somebody who thinks that if you've seen one naked woman, you've seen them all.

It is difficult to determine in clear and unequivocal terms where art ends and obscenity begins. The reader found the Miles photo distasteful, but some readers did not find anything wrong with them. But this should not be interpreted to mean that the reader viewed the shots with malice, while those who looked at them differently are open-minded. Each one has his own reason for reacting to the photos.

Range of readers

I can appreciate the dilemma the Lifestyle editor goes through whenever she reviews articles and photos that are out of the ordinary or deviate from the traditional norms of conduct or taste.

For some readers, homosexuality is taboo. They do not like to see photos of gays and lesbians flaunting their unique sexuality in public. On the other hand, there are readers who believe there is nothing wrong with the third sex and enjoy reading about their activities in the newspaper.

The INQUIRER is not focused on a certain sector of our society. Its readership ranges from decision-makers in government and business to entrepreneurs to salaried employees to the ordinary man in the street. If it wants to maintain its standing in the country, it has to meet the reading requirements of its subscribers.

In the process of giving its readers the information and entertainment they need or want, it is inevitable that some of its reports or photos may not sit well with a group of readers or be interpreted in a manner different from that intended.

I think this was what happened in the Miles photos. It was all right with the adult population but not for the younger set whose minds are not yet ready to see revealing poses of the female person.

In my opinion, the Miles photos were too racy for comfort. The objective of highlighting the beauty of her physical attributes could have been achieved without making her do poses that are common fare in girlie magazines. I have seen photos of models for feminine wear in other publications that are done tastefully or where the focus is on the clothes being promoted rather than on the body of the model.

The INQUIRER regrets whatever discomfort the photos in question may have caused some of its readers.

Finally, since the jury is still out on the issue of art and obscenity, this column will be glad to hear from the readers about their thoughts and suggestions on the matter.

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

THEY SAID

Revision by Con-con

"Rather than Congress, a constitutional convention should make these changes. This is for genuine reforms to be adopted because Congress has vested interests."

—Former University of the Philippines president Jose Abueva on changing the Charter

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Focus on substantive issues in Charter debate

THE LEVEL of debate on Charter change or amendment has largely been kept to the personal. Critics have been outspoken in insisting that Congress, or specifically the House of Representatives, has selfish motives in seeking to amend the Constitution through a constituent assembly, meaning members of the Senate and House sitting together.

Very few bother to look at specific Charter provisions injurious to the national economy and must now be totally erased or substantially amended.

I attended one Charter change forum last week and was surprised to hear that certain economic provisions by lawyer Lourdes Sereno, associate professor of the University of the Philippines College of Law, grabbed my attention. She said that the Philippine Constitution has the most restrictive economic provisions compared to those of other Asian countries. Being also the most detailed, it takes away from Congress the flexibility to introduce needed policy changes especially in economic policy. Other countries are said to exercise regulation of foreign investments and of the economy as a whole through legislation.

Her recommendation and, I hope, thinking and critical Filipinos will listen, is to delete all economic provisions in the Constitution that have equity restrictions. She traced the nationalistic provisions, especially equity restrictions on land ownership, operation of public utilities, exploitation of natural resources, ownership of mass media and educational institutions, to the lobby of American businessmen who already established themselves in the local economy and did not relish new competition from American businessmen with larger capital.

A thorough review of these nationalistic provisions should be the focus of the new debate. Are these provisions relevant to our survival in a globalized economy? Is it true that the only ones who benefit are the large, wealthy families whose only interest is to keep their profits and preserve their business empire? What will the Filipino poor benefit from such provisions in terms of quality but inexpensive products and services?

These are specific provisions that have an absolute bearing on who will benefit from our economic development. Let us not be too immersed in speculations on who would become prime minister in a parliamentary setup. This is juvenile. Let us do something for the future: study and analyze the substantive issues. In the end, let us give to our people the best that we deserve.

—ALDWIN REQUEJO,
UP Bliss, Quezon City

Laws on environment not obstructive

THANK YOU for the article "GMA's marching orders to DENR: Review laws that impede mining" last Jan. 21, 2003 which highlighted President Macapagal-Arroyo's support for the country's mining industry.

However, allow us to clarify some points, particularly the statements about a "review of laws that may have impeded the application of the 1995 Philippine Mining Act," such as "the controversial 1997 Indigenous People's Rights Act (Ipra) and the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) law."

During our Jan. 7 meeting with National Commission on Indigenous People's (NCIP) officials, we agreed to create a joint task force to harmonize the provisions of the Mining Act, the 1997 Indigenous People's Rights Act, the National Integrated Protected Areas Systems Act, the Philippine Forestry Code and other similar laws. The task force will conduct extensive review of the laws and their implementing rules and seek inputs from all stakeholders: the mining sector, the *katutubo*, non-government organizations (NGOs), people's organizations (POs) and others—in a bid to protect the interests of all concerned. We then hope to come out with a joint issuance to guide our respective field offices as well as all others concerned.

We therefore want to clarify that at no time did we say that Ipra and Nipas are obstructive.

As we reap the resources that God has given us and create wealth, we must make sure that we do not compromise the environment and the interests of the indigenous peoples and other disadvantaged groups in society. The revitalization of the mining industry will be anchored on these three pillars of sustainable development: economic development, environmental protection and social development.

—ELISEA G. GOZUN, secretary,
Department of Environment and Natural Resources,
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

LETTERS
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Ilocos marker in NCGS safekeeping

THIS is a rejoinder to the news article titled, "Marker for Ilocos Norte sand dunes disappears." (PDI, 1/30/03)

To allay any misconceptions or suspicions from the general public, particularly the concerned residents, regarding the whereabouts of the marker, we wish to inform the public that it is now in the custody of the Secretariat of the National Committee on Geological Sciences (NCGS) for refurbishing, cleaning and reinstallation.

This situation came about as a result of some less civic-minded people who detached the marker from the pedestal. It was brought to our attention by an employee of the Regional Office I of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau who was asked to bring the marker to Manila.

Consequently, through the previous NCGS coordination meetings relative to the maintenance of existing National Geological Monument markers and after on-site inspections, the marker for the Ilocos Norte Sand Dunes Geological Monument has been recommended for rehabilitation and restoration. We are now preparing the necessary changes to make the marker more appealing and less conducive to vandalism. Likewise, we have prepared a better plan and a more sturdy setup for this purpose. Rest assured that this marker shall be restored before the end of the third quarter of this year.

—ANGEL A. BRAVO,
executive secretary,
National Committee
on Geological Sciences c/o
Mines and Geosciences Bureau,
North Avenue, Diliman, QC

BID detainee seeks hearing on his case

THIS is a rejoinder to Immigration Commissioner Andrea Domingo's letter which was published in Recah Trinidad's column last Jan. 24.

The letter said I had a low regard for Filipino women, chiefly because I consider acts of lasciviousness and simple seduction as "minor." But my statement was taken out of context. I only labeled them "minor" in view of the fact that they all started as rape charges against me but were downgraded to simple seduction and acts of lasciviousness after my enemies failed to come up with sufficient evidence. I am 100-percent sure that I will win those cases as there is no truth to those charges.

The reason I was so happy at my hearing was that the main witness against me was caught lying in court.

The commissioner also said that the "Board of Commissioners has decided to deport Mr. McNeely in view of the deportation charges filed against him." If indeed the BOC has already made a decision to deport me, then why is it that neither I nor my lawyer Oscar Tan has been furnished a copy of the deportation order as the law requires? Why has there been no effort to let me know of any of the developments in my deportation case? I find it hard to believe that anyone would be deported without even a hearing.

The commissioner also said that when my room at Metro Park Hotel was raided on Feb. 9, 2000, "the ensuing search yielded four cameras, photos of nude Filipinas, and among others, bio-data forms of other young women in Cebu and other provinces."

The truth is that all those four cameras were Instamatic cameras owned by different people who joined me for my birthday celebration, and those photos were taken from the Internet by my American friends who later turned out to be my enemies. The bio-data forms, though all were blank, were brought in by the same former friends who made sure there would be enough incriminating evidence against me.

The letter also stated that I escaped prosecution based on a technicality. This could not be farther from the truth. The prosecution failed to come up with a single witness to testify against me, so the court had to throw out the case. After three long years of hearings, the prosecution could not find even one witness who would testify that I was associated with any mail-order-bride scheme, as my enemies claimed. So it was not just because of a simple technically that the case was finally dismissed.

I have never been convicted anywhere. I had already posted bail on the charges of simple seduction and acts of lasciviousness at the regional trial court many months before my arrest by BID agents.

All I am asking for is a fair hearing which I haven't had in the almost two years that I have been in the BID jail.

—PERRY MCNEELY,
Bureau of Immigration and Deportation, Mandaue City

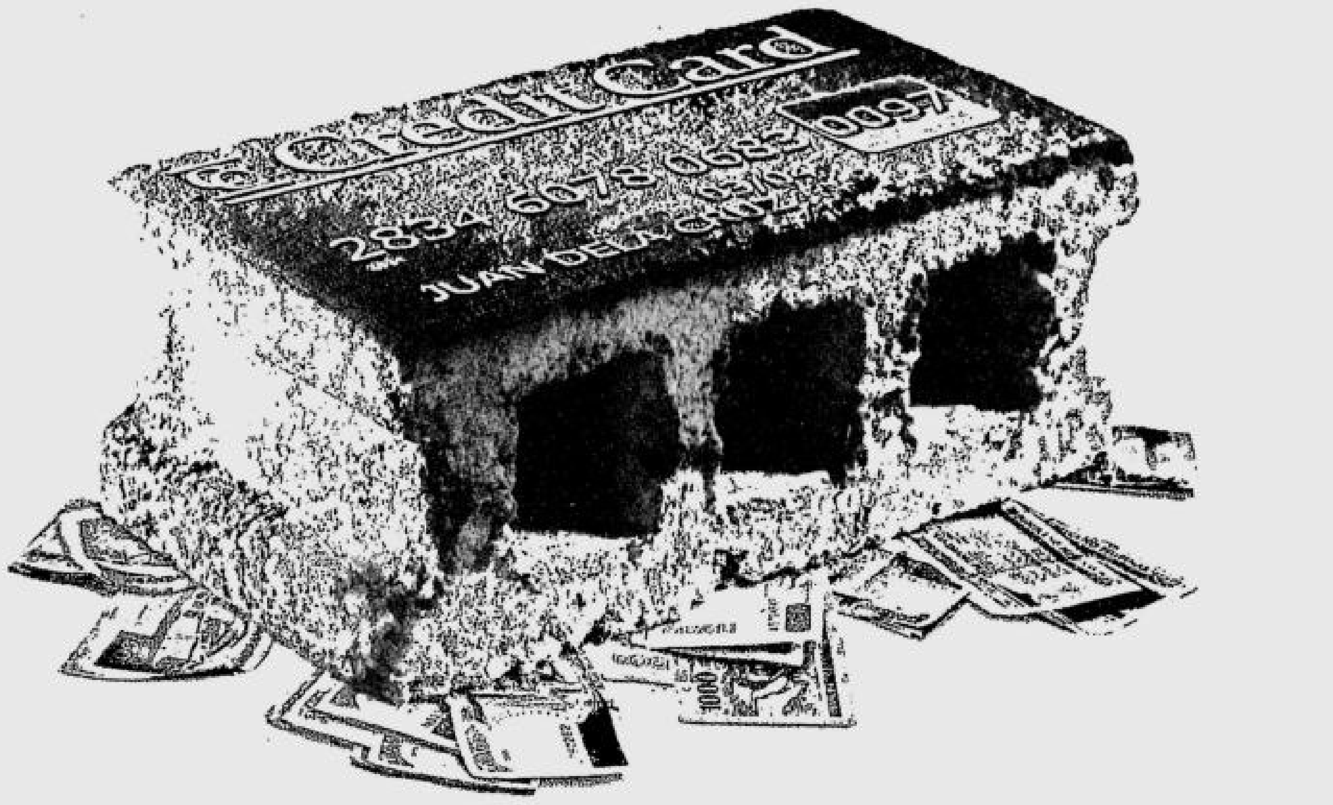
Lump-sum benefits for vets sought

AFTER MORE than 12 years of waiting and follow-ups, my mother, Dionisia David, finally started receiving her surviving spouse pension in October last year. But she has yet to receive the lump-sum benefit since my father, Roso David, died in 1990.

I would like to ask the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office to release it to my mother as soon as possible. Being 92 years old, she is now weak and she deserves to enjoy the benefits during her remaining years. After all, she has served the government and this country well as a public school teacher.

During the various follow-ups we made, we were told that the release of the lump sum depends on the availability of funds. I am hoping that the government will give priority to the old citizens who have faithfully served this country.

—LEA D. HERMOSILLA,
Hermosilla@lineafina.com



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World leaders express condolences for tragedy

KATHRYN O'Neill and her son kneel at space center's entrance. GETTY IMAGES

BEIJING—World leaders offered condolences Sunday for the loss of the space shuttle Columbia and its seven crew members, as thousands in India and Israel mourned the deaths of two of the astronauts who had become national heroes.

The Columbia disintegrated over the US state of Texas Saturday minutes before it was to land, killing all seven crew members, including Israel's first astronaut and the first Indian-born woman in space.

"For us in India, the fact that one of them is an India-born woman adds a special poignancy to the tragedy," Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said in his condolences to US President George W. Bush.

In the Indian town of Karnal, the birthplace of crew member Kalpana Chawla, jubilation turned to sorrow. She emigrated to the United States in the 1980s and became an astronaut in 1994.

Teenagers and the elderly gathered around a shrine with a photograph of Chawla draped in marigold garlands. In the picture, she was wearing a Nasa uniform.

"Yesterday evening we came here to celebrate her arrival. But, when we heard this news we were really shocked," said 18-year-old Vivek Nagpal.

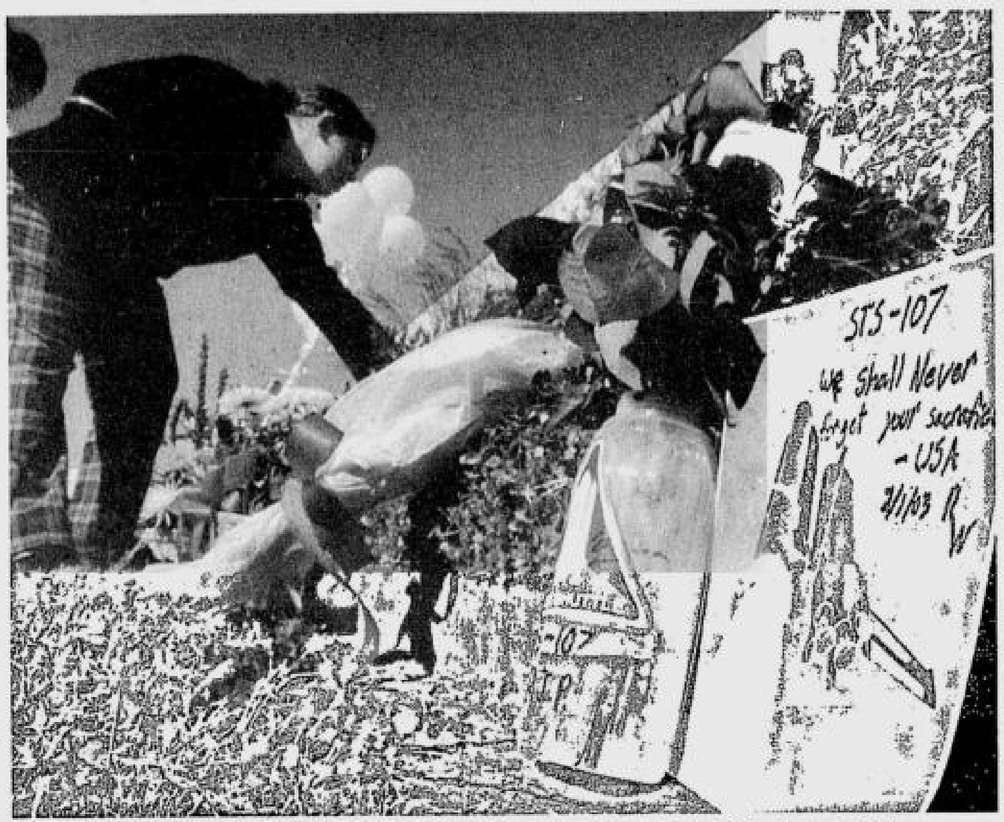
"It was a very great loss to our country," he said. "She proved that nothing is impossible."

Like Chawla, Israeli Ilan Ramon's role in the mission held special significance for his troubled country, where spirits were lifted when he blasted off last month on Columbia. Ramon was an Air Force colonel and the son of a Holocaust survivor.

Israeli teenagers who designed an experiment taken into space by Ramon gathered in stunned disbelief Saturday night to mourn their hero.

"It's like going on a trip and getting to the door of your house and falling just as you go in," said Adar Moritz, 17, who traveled to the US state of Florida to watch the Columbia launch on Jan. 16. "It's very sad."

Chinese President Jiang Zemin sent Bush his condolences, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. He also sent a message to Israeli President Moshe Katsav.


STS-107
We Shall Never forget your sacrifice
- USA
2/1/03

TIFFANY Barney, 19, of Friendswood, Texas, places flowers at the entrance of the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center on Feb. 1 in Clear Lake, Texas. Tiffany was one of hundreds who came to the Johnson Space Center to leave flowers in remembrance of the seven astronauts that died when the US space shuttle Columbia broke apart during reentry into the Earth's atmosphere. AFP

Chinese message

Jiang said he believed that mankind would continue to make further progress in space exploration despite the setback, Xinhua reported. China hopes to send its first astronauts into space this year.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi delivered his prayers to US Secretary of State Colin Powell. "On behalf of the government and people of Japan, I pray for the crew members who accomplished their mission courageously for the progress of all mankind," he said.

The accident will immediately affect Japanese astronaut Soichi Noguchi, who was to fly on Nasa's next shuttle mission, planned for Mar. 1. US officials have suspended all shuttle flights during the investigation of the Columbia accident.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa said he was "deeply shocked and saddened to learn of the tragic loss," while South Korean President-elect Roh Moo-hyun sent a letter of condolence to Bush saying he was "confident that their noble sacrifice will not be in vain but cherished as a foundation of mankind's continuing exploration into space."

Russian President Vladimir Putin called Bush to express his condolences, saying US-Russian cooperation in space exploration made the accident even more tragic for Russians.

French President Jacques Chirac expressed "the profound emotion and feeling of solidarity . . . that all my compatriots are feeling." German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder paid tribute to the "courageous men and women" of Columbia's crew.

In letters to Bush and Sharon, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said he wished to "express the government's sadness and offer his condolences after the death of the courageous astronauts," his office said.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien also praised the astronauts' bravery. "Each one was a hero. Their contribution to science and space exploration will never be forgotten," he said.

No boundaries

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said the accident was a loss to all humankind "because the exploration of space knows no national boundaries."

Pope John Paul II received the news with great sadness and prayed for the astronauts during services, a Vatican official said.

But in China, some tempered grief with hope.

"Mankind will not give up the dream of space exploration," Chen Maozhang, a professor at China's University of Aeronautic and Astronautic Science and Technology, was quoted as saying by Xinhua. *AP*

Aussie students heartbroken

SYDNEY—Eleven Australian high school students had a special reason to monitor Columbia's latest flight, and a special reason to mourn the seven shuttle astronauts who died when their craft disintegrated on reentry.

The students from Melbourne's Glen Waverley Secondary College had devised an onboard science experiment which involved Columbia taking eight common spiders into space to test the strength of spider webs in zero-gravity conditions.

Sixteen days ago the teenagers had had the thrill of watching the shuttle's launch from Cape Canaveral, in Florida, seated in stands right next to the astronauts' families.

"That's where our worries were. And when we saw it go up, we thought, 'Phew, that's it. All the stress is over,'" 17-year-old Jordan Pratt told Reuters.

"Who would think such a thing like this would happen today, just before it landed," he said.

"Everyone is heartbroken," said Pratt, whose science teacher mother drew him and others into the project.

The Australian project was one of six designed by high school students for the shuttle, along with others from Israel, Japan, Liechtenstein and the United States.

The Australian teenagers, some of whom were still in the United States, got in contact with each other by Internet and e-mail after hearing about the disaster. *Reuters*

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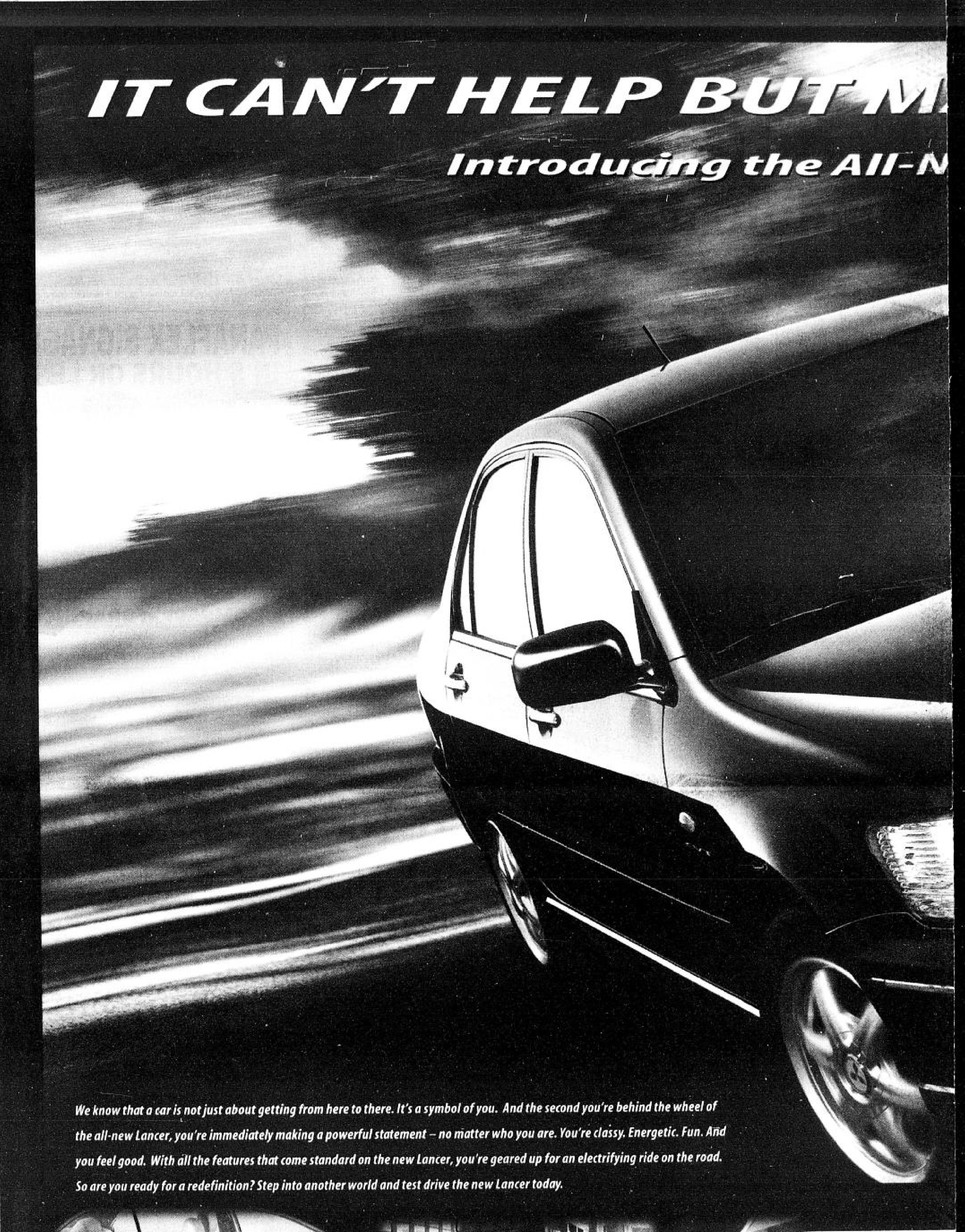

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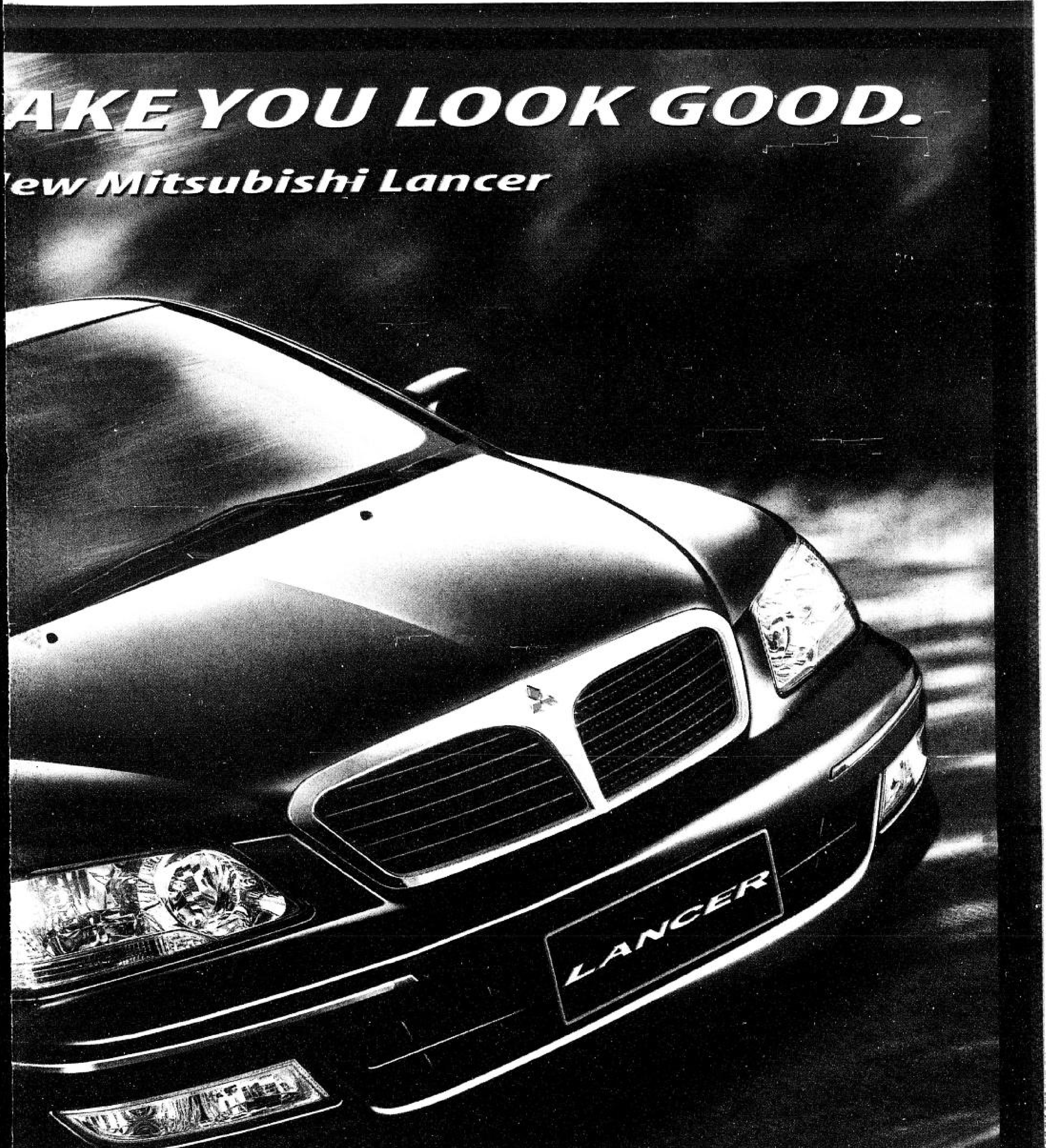
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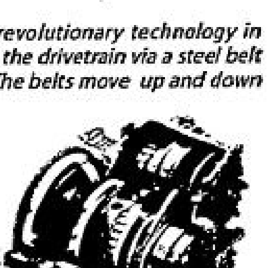

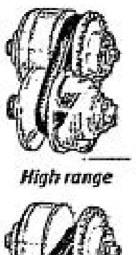
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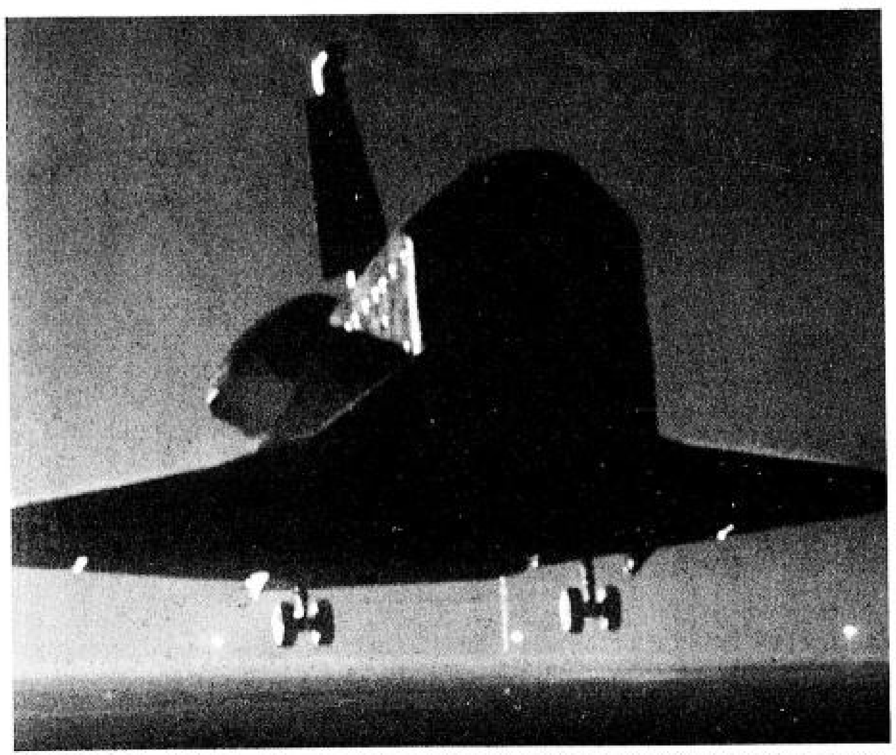
Americans gasp, cry at news of space shuttle explosion



THE SPACE shuttle Columbia prepares to land on Kennedy Space Center's Runway 33 in this early morning on March 12, 2002, file photo in Cape Canaveral, Fla. AP

LAS VEGAS—Americans woke up to images of the space shuttle Columbia disintegrating as it returned to Earth, killing seven astronauts. Another reminder of vulnerability. Another unnerving disaster with the nation still healing from the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

"With all that is happening these days, it's a very bad feeling," said Nancy Mitchell, a hardware store clerk in Confluence, Pennsylvania. "It's just one more thing—a tragedy."

Chika Umeh couldn't help but think the explosion happened at an especially bad moment for the nation. "Coming after 9-11 it's very scary," said Umeh, 45, a Los Angeles taxi driver.

Parents struggled to explain to their children what had happened.

Mario Schembari said his 7-year-old daughter, Amy, will have little trouble coping with the news. "Unfortunately, she's getting used to stuff like that," the Oak Park, Illinois, resident said as he and his daughter toured the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. "The run we've had the last few years, the catastrophes."

Audrey Schuckhaus, of Augusta, New Jersey, had just arrived at the antiques shop where she works when she saw co-workers huddled around a television set. White lines were streaking across a blue screen.

"Oh my God!" she gasped. "They went all the way up, were floating around in the atmosphere in outer space. They were almost home, so close to being safe. It's so sad."

At American Legion Post 1520 in Albany, New York, patrons stared at the big-screen TV from around a circular bar.

Greg Ruth, a state worker, said the shadow of terrorism, coupled with the knowledge that an astronaut from embattled Israel was aboard, made him wonder if sabotage brought down Columbia. But an FBI spokesperson said said there was no indication of terrorism.

It was deja vu for schoolteachers who had watched the Challenger explode after takeoff on Jan. 28, 1986, as it carried teacher Christa McAuliffe.

"It's completely shocked me," said Danny Allen, a science teacher at Cumberland County High School in Burkesville, Kentucky. "Nobody worries about the landing."

He and other teachers were in the middle of a space simulation at the Challenger Learning Center in Radcliff when they heard that contact had been lost with Columbia.

"Oh, gosh, not again," said Mohamed El Filali of Paterson, New Jersey, when he heard the news on his car radio while running errands. "It made me think of the Challenger, and what we went through with that. We realize that it's still dangerous. Every moment you're in the air, there's danger."

Ben Provencal, 25, of Concord, New Hampshire, was a third-grade classmate of McAuliffe's son, Scott, and said he had feared another disaster would happen.

"I've always waited for the next thing to happen," Provencal said. "They are brave people to do that, but you just can't do this business for years and years and years without losing people."

Jack Fidel, a retired civil engineer in Las Vegas, had just put his waffles in the toaster when he sat down to watch television.

"The first thing I saw were the streaks of white in the sky. Everybody was dead," said Fidel, 70. "A tear came to my eye for a second. Seven people on board. What a waste of life."

"People don't realize how impressive it is when you can put seven people in space," said Jason Thursten of Ferndale, Michigan. *AP*

US plans to start war on Iraq with big bang

WASHINGTON—US and British plans for the opening phase of a war on Iraq call for a precision bombing campaign that would destroy symbols of Saddam Hussein's power and demoralize Iraqi troops, media reports said Sunday.

The Pentagon intends to fire 3,000 guided bombs in the first 48 hours of a conflict to "pave the way for a ground attack to topple a government in shock," The New York Times newspaper reported, quoting unnamed US defense officials and a government advisor.

The raids would target Saddam's palaces and hometown of Tikrit as well as key ministries, Britain's Observer said.

"The war will start with an extremely large bang," one unidentified official told the paper. "The point of the exercise is to avoid fighting in Iraq's cities and persuade Iraqi forces very quickly that there is no point fighting to defend the regime."

The reports emerged as Washington and London sought to pressure reluctant allies on the UN Security Council to support a conflict if UN inspections under way did not destroy Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction.

Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, the heads of the UN inspection teams looking for illegal chemical, biological and nuclear programs, are to travel to Baghdad next Saturday for more talks with Iraqi officials.

They have insisted on greater cooperation from Baghdad, notably on the issues of allowing overhead flights by surveillance planes and the right to interview Iraqi scientists in private.

But US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair insisted during a meeting at the White House last Friday that "time is running out."

British newspapers reported that the two leaders had agreed on a mid-March deadline to win a new UN resolution authorizing force against Iraq. Failing that, Bush has repeated that he is willing to order a US-led invasion anyway.

In a bid to bolster the US case for war, US Secretary of State Colin Powell is to present intelligence reports to the UN Security Council on Wednesday that purportedly show links between Baghdad and al-Qaida, as well as evidence that Iraq is hiding prohibited weapons.

Newsweek magazine said the declassified information would include communication intercepts that were "damning and dramatic."

But The New York Times said that CIA analysts felt some of their reports were being "exaggerated," especially when it came to tying Saddam to terrorists.

"We've been looking at this hard for more than a year, and you know what, we just don't think it's there," one unidentified government official told the paper.

The UN inspectors have noted disturbing omissions in Iraq's weapons declaration but so far have found nothing beyond 16 missiles that could carry chemical agents. Blix has said that he has seen nothing so far that justifies a war.

The hardline US-British stance and Bush's insistence that he is willing to give Saddam "weeks, not months" to reveal his alleged weapons have added urgency to diplomatic efforts to avoid a military conflict.

A former South African foreign minister who oversaw his country's nuclear disarmament, Pik Botha, is to go to Iraq soon, according to former South African President Nelson Mandela, one of the most outspoken critics of a possible war.

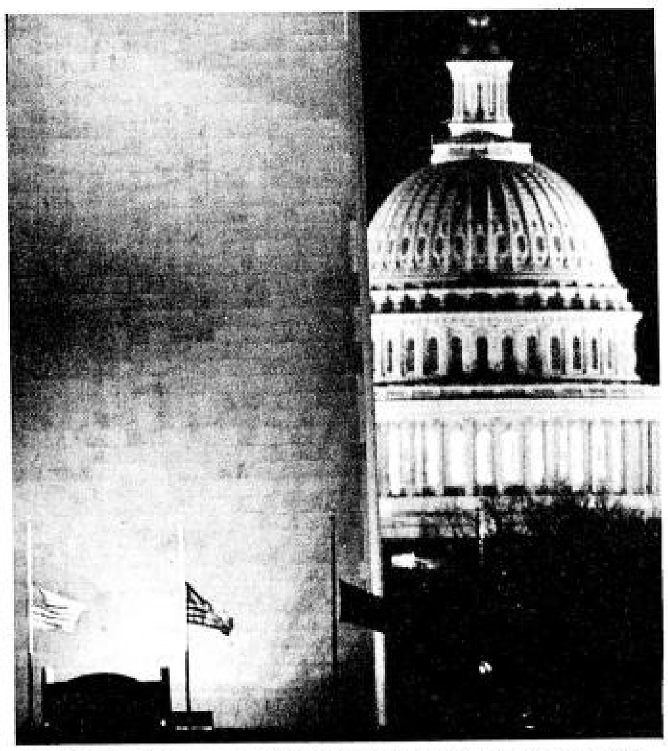
Greek Foreign Minister George Papandreou, whose country holds the rotating EU presidency, was to begin a tour of several Arab countries on Sunday. *AFP*

Further slide in support for war reversed

NEW YORK—President George W. Bush has reversed the slide in public support for a possible war with Iraq, with two-thirds (66 percent) saying they support military action against Iraq, according to an ABC-Washington Post poll released Saturday.

That's up from 57 percent who felt that way in mid-January in this poll. Significantly, 51 percent said they supported military action even if the United Nations was opposed. The number that supported military action over UN opposition was at 37 percent in mid-December.

Bush tried to make the case for his aggressive Iraq policy in the State of the Union speech Tuesday. Approval of the president's handling of the Iraq situation was up to 61 percent, compared with 50 percent in an ABC-Post poll released Jan. 20. *AP*



FLAGS on the Washington Monument grounds fly at half-staff with the US Capitol dome in the background, following the crash of the space shuttle Columbia. AFP

N. Korea blasts US for relying on UN

SEOUL—North Korea blasted the United States Sunday for trying to place the nuclear issue before the UN Security Council as a South Korean envoy left for Washington to push for a diplomatic deal.

"It is foolish to try to settle one's own issues by relying on the international organization," the North's ruling Workers Party newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, said in a commentary. "The United States does not believe in the UN and was only using it to do its dirty work."

It accused Washington of "clinging only to the logic of strength, indifferent to international justice and the United Nations."

The comments came after President-elect Roh Moo-Hyun's envoy, Chyung Dai-Chul, embarked on a trip to the United States and Japan.

The envoy will stay in the United States until Wednesday for talks with President George W. Bush and other US officials. He will visit Japan from Thursday.

Chyung is carrying a letter from Roh calling for a peaceful solution to the nuclear standoff, Roh's aides said. Roh is to travel to Washington shortly after he takes office on Feb. 25.

Before his departure, the envoy told reporters he would convey Roh's opposition to sanctions against North Korea or a military confrontation over the nuclear standoff.

South Korea has stressed the need for time to allow diplomacy to work to resolve the crisis. The United States has been pushing for it to be referred to the United Nations Security Council, which could impose sanctions.

North Korea says it would regard sanctions as a declaration of war.

The standoff followed US revelations in October that North Korea had admitted to running a secret enriched uranium program in violation of a 1994 accord under which the Stalinist country froze nuclear activities.

The United States suspended fuel aid to energy-poor North Korea. In response, Pyongyang threatened to reactivate a mothballed plutonium-producing nuclear complex and withdrew from the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. *AFP*

WorldBriefs

Fake Jesus in extortion

DILI, East Timor—Two men allegedly extorted hundreds of dollars from villagers in East Timor by persuading them to join a religious sect after parading two people they claimed were Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary, prosecutors and UN officials said Sunday. The men were arrested last week in southern Suai town, said state prosecutor Amandio de Sa Benvides. The pair, identified only by their initials D.B. and M.S., are due to appear in court later this month on extortion charges, he said. He said the men worked alongside a man and woman who posed as Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary to impress the villagers, most of whom are poor and have little formal education. The men then demanded the villagers pay $16 each to join a group that was allegedly a sect of the Roman Catholic Church. Its name was not known. They threatened the villagers with violence if they didn't pay up, Sa Benvides said. *AP*

Official picks unlucky number

HONG KONG—Hong Kong had an inauspicious start to the Lunar New Year on Sunday when a top official picked an unlucky fortune number at a Taoist temple during the second day of celebrations. Searching for economic guidance following record unemployment last year, Home Affairs Secretary Patrick Ho Chi-ping picked number 83 from 100 numbered slips in a round bamboo container when he visited the famous Che Kung Temple in Shatin district. Tradition holds that the 83rd slip means "nothing will be good" and augurs a very difficult time, like a junk facing a storm at sea. The junk, a Chinese boat, is a traditional symbol of this former fishing village. "It means that we are already at the bottom of the valley," Ho, in a traditional Chinese coat, told reporters at the temple. "We can't be worse." *AP*

Hijack attempt foiled

BEIJING—A man was detained Sunday for attempting to hijack an airplane on its way from Beijing to southeastern China, the official Xinhua News Agency reported. The incident occurred on an Air China flight bound for Fuzhou, the capital city of Fujian province, Xinhua said, quoting an unidentified source with the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China. Dong Yue, an unemployed 39-year-old , was subdued after a struggle and the flight landed safely, Xinhua said. No other details were provided. *AFP*

Stalingrad siege recalled

MOSCOW—Military parades and somber church services opened in Russia on Sunday to mark the Soviet Army's victory over Hitler's advancing troops in Stalingrad 60 years ago. Veterans marched alongside military academy students and soldiers as some 800 people filed through the snowy streets of Volgograd, as Stalingrad is now known, to mark the victory that turned the tide of World War II and ensured an Allied defeat of Nazi Germany. They raised high the flags of the 62nd and 64th regiments, which fought the ferocious 200-day battle in 1942-43, Russian television showed. Hundreds of locals came out to watch the parade, which was also attended by local officials and Viktor Kazantsev, President Vladimir Putin's envoy to the southern federal region, RIA Novosti news agency reported. In Moscow, members of the lower house of parliament, the State Duma, lay red carnations at the tomb of the unknown soldier outside the Kremlin walls. *AFP*

Hyundai payoff defended

SEOUL—North Korea, embroiled in a nuclear crisis, tried to defend the South's Hyundai Group on Sunday over allegations a Hyundai unit diverted money to the communist state to pave the way for a historic inter-Korean summit in 2000.

An investigation by South Korean government auditors has found that Hyundai Merchant Marine Co. used government-supplied funds—part of a $344 million state bank loan—to invest in an industrial park in the North.

South Korea's main opposition party had alleged since last year that the funds were funneled to North Korea to pave the way for President Kim Dae-jung's summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in June 2000.

Hyundai and South Korean President Kim's government have denied any wrongdoing and on Sunday the North's state news agency said right-wingers opposed to the reunification of the two Koreas were trying to spoil improving ties.

"Some ultra-right conservative anti-reunification forces brought up the issue in a sinister bid to bar the inter-Korean relations from smoothly developing," the North's official Korean Central News Agency said.

"The economic cooperation between the North and the South Korean Hyundai Group began as nongovernmental economic cooperation between the North and the South," it said. *Reuters*

Cambodia press takes walk on wild side

PHNOM PENH—Rumors, which fueled anti-Thai riots in Phnom Penh last week, are a staple of the anything-goes spirit of Cambodian newspapers set free after decades of political repression.

The particular rumor which sparked the anti-Thai violence claimed that beautiful Thai soap-opera actress Suvanant Kongying, who is as popular here as she is at home, had insulted the Cambodian people.

But it was apparently simply the latest in a long line of fiction published in the guise of news, including a 1999 claim that all condoms in Cambodia had been tainted with the AIDS virus by their manufacturers in Vietnam and Thailand.

Government pressure forced a retraction then, but not before the story had entered the annals of Cambodian popular myth.

In the latest case, the authorities have arrested the editor of the newspaper which first published the story that Suvanant Kongying had said Cambodia's famed Angkor Wat temples had been stolen from Thailand.

In Chansivutha, 48, editor of Rasmei Angkor (Light of Angkor), admits he did not check out the story, which had been told to him by three women who said they had seen the actress make the remarks on Thai cable television.

"I had no ability to investigate whether she had really said that or not and my aim was to allow the country and the government to investigate," he told fellow reporters as he was ushered into court to be charged with inciting riots.

He and Beehive Radio owner Mam Sonando, who faces the same charges, are being held in custody.

In their defense, journalists' organizations and opposition politicians have accused Prime Minister Hun Sen himself of fueling the riots by saying publicly that the actress was not worth "a few blades of grass near Angkor Wat." Hun Sen has blamed an unspecified "small extremist group" for the unrest.

Cambodia, a former French colony, target for American bombers during the Vietnam War and best-known internationally for the genocidal horrors of its 1970s Khmer Rouge regime, never knew a free press until 1993.

Now there are some 200 newspaper titles registered with the Ministry of Information, although many of them are not published regularly.

Journalists work for wages of between $10-$100 a month, leading to bribery by government officials or businessmen, and sometimes to extortion by the journalists.

The respected English-language Phnom Penh Post wrote recently: "Truth is often incidental, hearsay is treated like fact while a push-pull dynamic of extortion and bribes create or kill news stories as quickly as the opening of a wallet." At least six journalists have been killed over the past decade, and newspapers have been shut down by officials and attacked by mobs.

Pen Samithi, editor in chief of Rasmei Kampuchea (Light of Cambodia), said the professional standards of Cambodian newspapers had improved recently, with most now recognizing the distinction between fact and opinion. *AFP*

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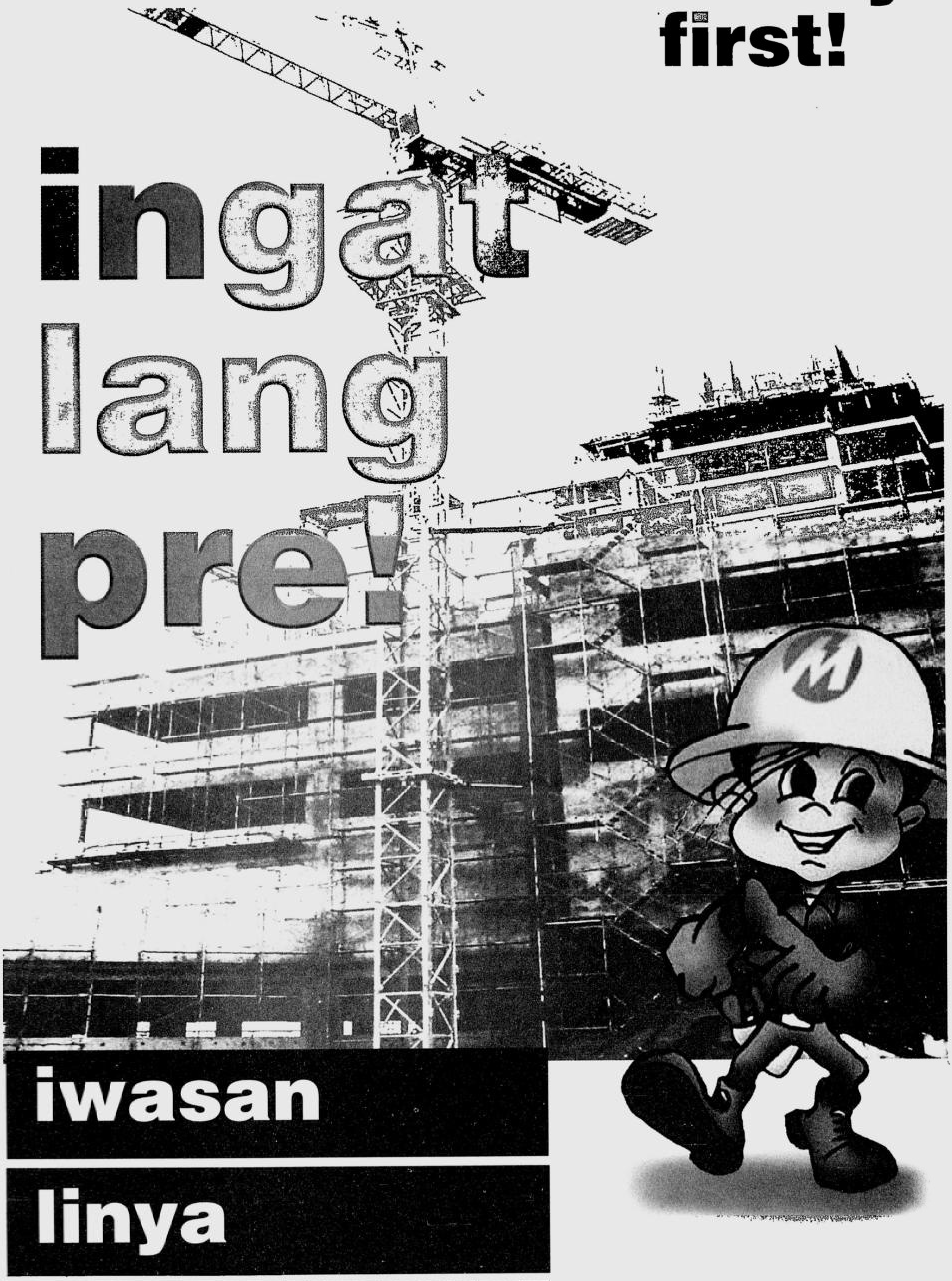
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Probe of Mt. Apo encroachment urged

By **Ayan C. Mellejor**, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

DAVAO CITY—An environmental group on Saturday asked Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun to investigate the alleged encroachment of banana plantations and other illegal activities within the 8,000-hectare protected area of Mt. Apo.

The Water Management Coordinating Council (WMCC), a network of non-government groups concerned with water, said banana plantations at the foothills of Mt. Apo have been slowly encroaching into the protected areas thereby threatening this city's ground water source.

The protected area, which includes Mt. Talomo and Lipadas areas down to the "catchment" area, is about 138,000 hectares.

Five hectares of land are planted to bananas in the protected area in Sitio Saro, Barangay Manuel Guianga in Tugbok District, according to WMCC.

The plantation is located in the 1,010-meter elevation of the Mt. Apo foothills. Down the Mt. Apo peak flow the Talomo and Lipadas Rivers, while Saro River is one of the tributaries. These rivers are the sources of drinking water of Davao City.

Environmentalists feared the plantation would further expand to 80 hectares including the slopes of the protected area down Saro River. Already, a cable carrier was set up between the protected area to Sitio Saro.

Another banana firm is expanding its plantation on the slopes of Saro in violation of the forestry laws that no structures of indigenous species should be within the 18-degree slope. If not stopped, running water contaminated by chemicals used by the banana plantations would go to the river, the WMCC said.

Victor Canizares, president of WMCC, said about 3,000 hectares of banana plantations in Manuel Guianga have no Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC).

Canizares said cellophanes which are used to cover the cavendish are thrown just anywhere. The cellophanes are reportedly laced with Lorsban chemicals.

Canizares said the problem in the area had been reported to the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro), then to the Environmental Management Bureau and the Regional Executive Director since three years ago. But nothing has been done. Hence, WMCC decided to lodge their concerns to Gozun hoping the problem would be addressed.

WMCC was worried over the reported dangerous levels of metal content of the rivers because the uplands have been transformed into big plantations.

The plantations are dependent on pesticides.

WMCC suspects that the high lead content of Saro Spring, which was recorded at 0.04 milligram per liter, was caused by chemicals.

A partial result of a study through water sampling conducted by the Philippine-Canada Environmental Economic Management showed that the surface water of Talomo river has a lead content of 0.326 milligram per liter at the highest and 0.10 milligram per liter at the lowest.

Engr. Rosindo Almonte, DCWD manager of the Environment and Watershed Protection Division, said the allowable level of river classification is 0.05 milligram per liter and 0.01 milligram per liter as set by the Philippine National Standard for Drinking Water.

ENDANGERED: a serpent eagle similar to the one caught in Misamis Occidental.
COURTESY OF THE PHILIPPINE EAGLE FOUNDATION

Serpent eagle recovered in Misamis mountain

OROQUIETA CITY—Another endangered bird was caught in a village near Mt. Malindang in Misamis Occidental.

But the serpent eagle (*Spilornis holospilos*) was sick when it was turned over to Rolando Dingal, Mt. Malindang protected area supervisor, on Monday.

Dingal said the serpent eagle, which stands one foot and has a wingspan of about two-and-a-half meters, needed health care and a space to recover fully.

Because of this, he said he made arrangements with the Protected Area Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) in Cagayan de Oro for the birds' transfer to the Malasag Eco-Village.

Residents of Barangay Senor in Sinacaban town rescued the serpent eagle from the dogs last weekend. They said the bird could not fly high.

Dingal said the village chair recognized the bird's distinctive plaintive whistling call and ordered residents to save it from harm.

When they caught the eagle, they informed Sinacaban town councilor Gregorio Libre, chairman of the municipal council's committee on environment and natural resources protection.

Early Monday morning, the same local leaders reported the eagle's capture. Dingal's office immediately dispatched a team to fetch it from barangay Senor.

Arturo Manamtam, biodiversity specialist for a non-government group here, said serpent eagles normally soar high above the forest and forest edges, over clearings and river valleys.*Ryan D. Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Chinese New Year fest now part of Baguio tradition

BAGUIO CITY—The Chinese New Year festival is celebrated not only in this mountain resort's Chinatown but by the whole city. The festival has become an integral part of the tradition of this gateway to the culture-rich Cordillera.

"I am impressed by how Chinese-Filipinos and Filipinos respect each other's culture here in Baguio City," Chinese consul general Zhu Tao Ying told the INQUIRER.

"This respect for each other's culture promotes not only harmonious relations, but also progress, which I can see in this city," she said.

She was this city's guest of honor on Friday when the Chinese-Filipino community, the city government, public and private schools and other sectors here embarked on a well-attended, colorful parade featuring lion dances and floats with goat icons to welcome the Year of the Goat.

Through City Ordinance No. 18 series of 1999, Baguio City became the only place in the country that has made it official to annually celebrate the Chinese New Year.

As an official activity, the Chinese New Year is thus a celebration of the entire city, during which "we can share each other's culture and tradition" and renew bonds "as members of one big family," Baguio City Rep. Mauricio Domogan said during a program capping the parade.

Mayor Bernardo Vergara also paid tribute to the "business acumen" of local Chinese-Filipinos for helping keep Baguio's economy afloat.

In response to the tributes from city officials, hotelier Peter Ng, who coordinated the parade, said continuing Chinese-Filipino unity, friendship and inter-cultural exchange could help promote a kind of tourism that would enhance not only the local economy but local culture as well.

A tourism that attracts cultural enthusiasts and academics may yet be one way to help enliven the country's sagging tourism industry, Dr. Charles Cheng, who wrote about the saga of early Chinese-Filipinos in the Cordillera, told the INQUIRER earlier.

He said promoting and understanding culture-enhancing activities can draw more tourists. *Maurice Malanes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

WARRANTLESS ARREST

Suspected rebels file charges vs police exec

By **Jolene Bulambot**
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Two suspected New People's Army rebels filed charges before the Visayas Ombudsman against personnel from the police's Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division and the Army's Intelligence Service following their warrantless arrest on Dec. 21.

Marylen Seno and Alberto Sancho, both of Cebu City, accused Insp. Richie Posadas, deputy chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Central Visayas, and SPO1 Eduardito Brigoli and PO3 Percival Eborlas of violating Section 2(b) of Republic Act 7438 that provides that every person arrested should be informed about the nature and cause of their arrest.

They also asked the anti-graft office to investigate the still unnamed chief officer of ISAFP-7 and his subordinates allegedly involved in the "arrest" for possible criminal and administrative liabilities.

The INQUIRER tried to get the comment of the officers named in the complaint but they could not be reached through their mobile phones. Lt. Ruby Bongabong, spokesperson of the AFP-Central Command, was also not available for comment.

In their joint-affidavit, Seno and Sancho claimed that at least 10 armed plainclothes men picked them up at around 7:30 a.m. of Dec. 21 while they were on their way home from Barangay Guadalupe, Cebu City.

Sancho said he was grabbed by the armed men without warning and without identifying themselves and forced him to board on a waiting van.

Seno said she thought the armed men were "terrorists" and were about to kidnap them. She said they tried to resist but were forced to board the van.

Both claimed they were blindfolded and handcuffed while being transported to a house on a hilly place. They said they were placed in different rooms and subjected to interrogation for three days while still blindfolded and their hands tied.

They said they only heard their interrogators speaking in Tagalog, Ilonggo, Boholano and Cebuano.

Seno said it was only on Dec. 23 when she was transferred to the Bagong Buhay Rehabilitation Center (BBRC). She was charged with obstruction of justice and freed on bail on Dec. 26.

Sancho was placed under the custody of the Cebu City Police Office and was transferred on Dec. 26 to CIDG headquarters at Camp Sotero Cabahug. He was charged with robbery-in-band for his alleged involvement in a robbery in a southern Cebu town sometime last year. He was released on bail on Dec. 27.

Both denied the charges. They said that "during the whole period of our confinement from the time of our arrest until our eventual release, none of these officers informed us of our rights as persons arrested and placed under custodial investigation as mandated by Republic Act 7438."

Suspect in Maguindanao blast wrongly identified

DAVAO CITY—One of the suspects in the Dec. 24 Maguindanao blast, which killed Mayor Saudi Ampatuan of Datu Piang town and 16 of his followers, had been wrongly identified.

Former Vice Mayor Hadji Abdulkadir Maulana of Sultan sa Barongis town, also of Maguindanao, said the inclusion of his nephew, Ido Maulana, in the charge sheet has startled them.

He said he and the suspect's brother, Treasurer Abdila Maulana of Sultan sa Barongis, had immediately talked with Gov. Datu Andal Ampatuan, father of the slain mayor, after reports identified Ido as one of the suspects.

Gov. Ampatuan, he said, had clarified that Ido was not supposed to be named as one of the suspects.

The other suspects the military and the police have named were Darry Dagandal of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Datu Piang Vice Mayor Benny Boy Mokalid, Ismael Makintas, Kamusa Tado, Roque Makalag, Bon Guiandanao, Hadi Abdulrasid and Masla Mama.

Mokalid was thought to have ordered the attack because he was hurting from his ouster as vice mayor.

The Maguindanao provincial board, upon the recommendation of the Datu Piang town council, unseated Mokalid for absenteeism. Authorities said Mokalid might have blamed Ampatuan for his removal from office.

As this developed, Bai Soraida Biruar-Ampatuan, widow of the mayor, said she had no prior knowledge that her name was used as the plaintiff against Ido.

The slain mayor's son, Datu Saudi Ampatuan Jr., a senior student of the De La Salle University, said there might be error somewhere in the process.

Abdila, who sought to clear his brother's name with the military's 6th Infantry Division, said there were indications that raw intelligence reports failed to consider that Ido and the other suspects named in the warrant of arrest, were bitter enemies.

He said he had to refer to old local newspaper files to illustrate his point that his brother and the persons that authorities have identified as suspects in the bloody incident, have been at odds.

The MILF has also stood up in defense of Dagandal, who is known as commander Rambo.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said Dagandal had no ax to grind against the victims.

Kabalu said Rambo could not be involved in the bomb attack because he had no grudge against the slain mayor. He said the beleaguered MILF leader was also not in Datu Piang when the explosion occurred.

However, he admitted that Rambo's men had previously clashed with the men of the slain mayor in Barangay Nimao.

The incident, he insisted, had long been settled through the intervention of the MILF hierarchy and the Ampatuan clan.

The military and the police said they were sure of Rambo's link to the explosion based on the result of investigations.

Maj. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division based in Maguindanao, said they were even suspecting that the MILF, as an organization, had plotted the bomb attack.

But Kabalu appealed to authorities to wait for the result of the joint investigation undertaken by the government and the MILF before judgment is made. *Allan A. Nawal and Charlie C. Señase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Mindoro power summit vows to solve brownouts

BATANGAS CITY—Resolutions to repair, rehabilitate, and overhaul the power infrastructures in the two island provinces of Mindoro were presented to Energy Secretary Vincent Perez last week during the first ever Mindoro Power Summit at the University of Asia and the Pacific in Pasig City.

"I am glad that you got together, which shows your political will to address the power concern in your provinces," he said.

Ironically, a seven-day brownout hit the entire Mamburao-Paluan, Sta. Cruz and Abra de Ilog (Mapsa) area of Occidental Mindoro on Tuesday dawn while the top officials of the province were attending the summit.

Three wooden electric posts were burned by the massive slash-burning in the mountains between Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro and Abra de Ilog town.

Power supply for the MAPSA area comes from the 32 megawatt power barge in Puerto Galera and is transmitted by a 70-kilometer transmission line of the National Power Corp. located in the mountainous area of Mindoro.

Engineer Alex Labrador, general manager of Occidental Mindoro Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Omeco), said the company will make sure that the brownout does not last for seven days.

"We will do everything in our power to speed up the replacement of the electric post by a steel post in four to five days," Labrador said.

"Our men have to climb up there with the Mangyans to replace the fallen burned posts," he added.

But brownouts in this area are nothing new. Brownouts caused by burned power transmission lines happened on April last year.

When it hit again last Tuesday, the Napocor and the Omeco were again caught flatfooted by the brownout.

A disgusted businessman from Mamburao said the business sector have suggested a standby power source, but "it has always fallen on deaf ears like the burned wooden electric posts."

Perez discussed the potential power sources like hydro from Catuwiran River in Oriental Mindoro and wind energy from Mount Halcon which could be more viable and clean energy source.

"The least intervention of nature, the better," said Perez.

He added that the presence of indigenous communities and their possible displacement should also be considered.

Shell Philippines Explorations (SPEX) sponsored the summit.

Provincial Gov. Jose Villarosa said Occidental Mindoro's power crisis hampers its development.

Although Occidental Mindoro has the Island Power Corp., an independent power producer based in San Jose town that produces seven megawatts of electricity, the Mapsa area relies on the Puerto Galera power barge in Oriental Mindoro and repairs on the Napocor 5-megawatt substation in Barangay Tayamaan, Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro could only prolong the rust of the 30-year-old equipment used in the substation. *Mei Magsino and Donna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ROUNDUP

1 dead in mishap

COTABATO CITY—A locked steering wheel of a passenger bus plying the Cotabato-Davao route triggered a vehicular accident that left a pedestrian dead and at least 40 others injured in Magsaysay, Davao del Sur yesterday morning. PO3 Rodolfo Redonda, traffic deputy chief of nearby Bansalan town, said the bus, loaded with about 45 passengers, plunged into a 20-meter deep cliff in Barangay Opon, Magsaysay town. Redondo identified the fatality as Marcial Barrios Jr., of Balawan, Malasila, Makilala, Cotabato. Barrios was walking beside the highway when hit by the speeding bus. *Edwin O. Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Lawmaker's assurance

DUMAGUETE CITY—Negros Oriental Rep. Emilio C. Macias II has assured his constituents about his health as he confirmed reports that he underwent prostate surgery in Manila last December. Macias told village leaders in a meeting Sunday that he decided to undergo surgery after he learned he was at risk of developing cancer. "That's a risk all men undergo as we get handsomer," Macias, 69, joked, as he reassured his leaders that he was "still good for ten more years in public service so those of you who are thinking of replacing me [in politics] had better wait." *Alex V. Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Guilty of molestation

BACOLOD CITY—Three detainees at the Bacolod City Police Precinct 1 jail were found guilty of molesting in August last year an 18-year-old student who was detained at that time. The girl, who was jailed for failing to pay P226 in Internet cafe bill, was waiting for her parents to bail her out when she was dragged into the jail's toilet and molested by four prisoners. Marlon Asong, who forced her to perform a sexual act, got 14 years in prison, while two other detainees were been found guilty of acts of lasciviousness and were each meted one-month prison terms.
Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Suspected pusher killed

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—A suspected drug pusher was killed while his three-year-old daughter was wounded Thursday night when armed men barged into their house in Macabebe town and shot them. Chief Insp. Gallardo Lagman, Macabebe police chief, identified the fatality as Leocadio Ibay, 30, said to be a known drug pusher in Barangay San Jose. Reports said the Ibays were sleeping when they were awakened by loud knocks on the door. After several knocks, the armed men barged into the house and shot Ibay. A stray bullet hit one of his daughters, Lyka. Recovered from the scene were several empty shells of .45 cal. pistol.
Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

12:30 movement

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—To help President Macapagal-Arroyo achieve progress, about a hundred leaders and members of non-government and church groups in Laguna launched the Laguna Chapter of the Alas Dose y Medya Movement on Saturday. The convention aimed to identify issues and concerns that could support the Macapagal administration's tasks for the remaining 18 months. Msgr. Jerry Bitoon, over-all convenor of the movement in Laguna, said in a statement, the leaders' forum will tap and promote small and medium-scale enterprises and cooperatives for economic growth and job generation in rural areas. *Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Clean ports

LEGAZPI CITY—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Bicol urged ferry operators in Bicol to clean their respective areas in the ports. Different sectors raised complaints over dirty water and terminals in some areas like the Matnog port in Sorsogon, creating a bad image to the province since the port serves as the window of Bicolandia to the Visayas. DENR regional executive director Oscar M. Hamada said they will request ferry operators to give their share in conducting cleaning operations to remove all the wastes thrown in the sea and in the terminal area itself. He also recommended the imposition of penalties on ferry operators who would contribute pollution in their respected areas.
Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Bus firm hit

PILA, Laguna—The relatives of a church worker who was crashed to death by a passenger bus along the national highway here five months ago, hit the bus firm RRCG Trans System Co. for not indemnifying the victim and for allowing the accused driver to go scot-free. Sabino Palispis Garcia, 68, father of the victim told the INQUIRER that after five months since his son, Francisco Paregrina Garcia, 24, was crashed to death by the RRCG bus, their family never received any centavo for the death, burial, and property damages sustained by the victim. The bus was driven by Johnny Alas Dahingo, 36. Dahingo is facing a criminal case at the Pila Municipal Trial Court for reckless imprudence resulting to homicide and damage to property. *Romulo Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

UP educators criticize 'English only' directive

Say GMA order ignores success of use of vernacular in teaching

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—President Macapagal Arroyo's directive restoring English as the mandatory teaching language could have ignored the successes made by pilot learning programs that used the local vernacular for schools, educators in the Cordillera said on Thursday.

An Abra elementary school, for example, managed to graduate "highly rated" Grade One pupils under the Department of Education's national lingua franca program in 2001, claimed Mario Ramirez, DepEd assistant director for the Cordillera.

Dr. Modesta Bastian, chief of DepEd Cordillera's elementary education division, said the language tests in Abra proved that the vernacular allowed students to quickly access and absorb general knowledge.

Ramirez said officials have no idea how Ms Macapagal's "English only" directive will affect the "bilingual teaching" program launched during the term of President Joseph Estrada.

Advocates of Filipino as a teaching medium are wary about the impact of Ms Macapagal's directive.

University of the Philippines Baguio Chancellor Priscilla Macansantos said the UP has invested in studies that explore the advantages of using local Filipino languages as teaching medium, instead of English.

In 1997, UP tested the impact on college students of mathematics, natural sciences and general information textbooks that were written in Filipino.

Macansantos said the tests proved that Filipino as a teaching medium made "concepts easier to absorb," although it established how meager the state of the Filipino language is currently in.

"There are difficulties when you mix terminologies or translate such words as torque or tension in Physics, or genes in Biology, into adaptable Filipino. At least that was what came out from my own informal queries," she said.

But UP Baguio has since shifted its attention to the impact of indigenous Filipino dialects and cultural materials on education.

A UP Baguio professor, for example, has collated Cordillera folktales for use in elementary schools.

Dr. Eufronio Pungayan, an Ibaloi linguist, wrote Baguio Rep. Mauricio Domogan on Jan. 20, asking him to sponsor a measure that would make Cordillera languages a mandatory course here.

Advocates of the Filipino teaching medium said their initiatives are not "anti-English."

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Space shuttle explosion: Glory turns to grief

From page A1

and glided in for a landing in Florida.

"The Columbia is lost," said President George W. Bush, after telephoning the families of the astronauts to console them.

"The same Creator who names the stars also knows the names of the seven souls we mourn today," Bush said. "The crew of the shuttle Columbia did not return safely to Earth but we can pray they are safely home." *(For their profiles, see story on Page A1.)*

The loss of seven explorers of space's dark reaches—shuttle commander Rick Husband, Michael Anderson, David Brown, Kalpana Chawla, Laurel Clark, William McCool and Ramon—brought grief to the nation. It was a relatively inexperienced crew; only three—Husband, Anderson and Indian-born Chawla—had flown before. *(More stories in The World, Pages A11 and A14.)*

The others were rookies, including Ramon, a former Israeli fighter pilot who carried into space a small pencil drawing titled "Moon Landscape" by Peter Ginz, a 14-year-old Jewish boy killed at Auschwitz.

The search for the cause began immediately. One focus: possible damage to Columbia's protective thermal tiles on the left wing from a flying piece of debris during liftoff on Jan. 16. *(See story on Page A1.)*

Shuttle manager Ron Dittemore said "there was no indication of any impending threats to the vehicle." Then there was a loss of data from temperature sensors on the left wing, followed by a loss of data from tire pressure indicators on the left main landing gear.

The final radio transmission between Mission Control and the shuttle, at 9 a.m. (1400 GMT), gave little indication of any trouble. *(See story on Page A19.)*

Mission Control radios: "Columbia, Houston, we see your tire pressure messages and we did not copy your last."

Columbia's commander, Rick Husband, calmly responds: "Roger, uh, buh ..."

For several seconds, the transmission goes silent. Then, there is static. In 42 years of US human space flight, there had never been an accident during the descent to Earth or landing.

The flight was the 113th in the shuttle program's 22 years and the 28th flight for Columbia, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's oldest shuttle which was built in 1981 at a cost of about $1 billion.

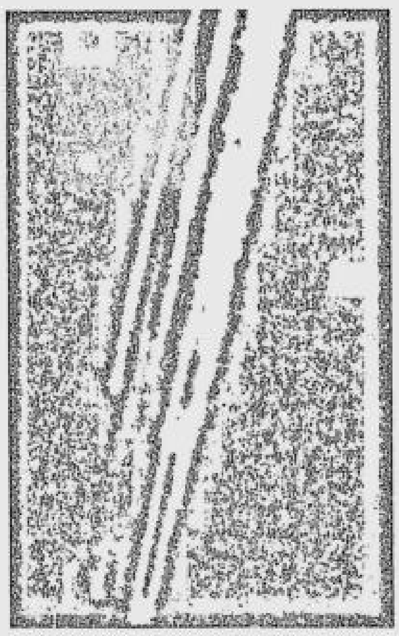
Television footage showed a bright light followed by white smoke plumes streaking diagonally across the sky. Debris appeared to break off into separate balls of light as it continued downward.

"We saw it coming across the sky real bright and shiny and all in one piece. We thought it was the sun shining off an airplane," said Doug Ruby, who was driving along a Texas highway. "Then it broke up in about six pieces—they were all balls of fire—before it went over the tree line."

Flight helmet, human remains

Pieces of the spacecraft were found in several east Texas counties and in Louisiana. Among the items found: An astronaut's charred patch, and a flight helmet. A piece of debris the size of a compact car fell into Toledo Bend Reservoir on the Texas-Louisiana line, said Sabine County Sheriff Tom Maddox.

There were at least two reports of human remains recovered—in Hemphill, Texas, a hospital employee reported finding what appeared to be a charred torso, thigh bone and skull on a rural road near what was believed to be other debris. On a farm not far away, two young boys found a charred human leg, The Dallas Morning News reported Sunday.



VIDEO image shows Columbia disintegrating. AP

In Nacogdoches, 217 km northeast of Houston, a National Guardsman stood watch over a steel rod with silver bolts. People streamed up to take photos of the debris.

The Federal Aviation Administration issued a notice to airmen because the National Weather Service radar picked up a debris cloud about 153 km long and 21 to 35 km wide over Lake Charles, Louisiana.

Nasa asked members of the public to help in its search for debris, but warned people not to touch the pieces because they might be contaminated with toxic propellants. "Several people have been hospitalized at this time throughout the state for handling the debris," said Karen Steele, spokesperson for Hemphill, Texas police.

Auction of debris

Authorities also warned that shuttle debris was considered US government property and anyone found moving or tampering with the debris was subject to criminal charges. Two Texas US attorneys said they were investigating a Federal Bureau of Investigation report that attempts had been made to sell wreckage on the Internet auction site eBay.

Just in the past week, Nasa observed the anniversary of its only two other space tragedies, the Challenger explosion on Jan. 28, 1986, and the Apollo spacecraft fire that killed three on Jan. 27, 1967.

The horrific end of shuttle mission STS-107 was a devastating blow to the nation's space program; the Challenger explosion led to a 2½-year moratorium on launches, and Saturday's accident could bring construction of the International Space Station to a standstill.

The shuttle delivers components of the space station to be installed; it also carries crews to and from the station. The three astronauts now on board the station could return to Earth at a moment's notice via a Russian vehicle attached to the space station. Six shuttle flights had been planned for 2003—five of them to the space station. The next was scheduled for March 1.

Half-staff

The American flag next to Mission Control's countdown clock was lowered to half-staff. Nasa Administrator Sean O'Keefe met with the astronauts' families, who had been waiting at the landing site for the shuttle's return. Six of the seven astronauts were married, and five had children.

Elsewhere across the United States, relatives struggled with shock and misery even as they sought to celebrate the astronauts' lives and the passion that drove them in spite of the dangers.

"It had been an absolutely flawless flight," crew member Laurel Clark's brother, Daniel Salton, said by phone from Milwaukee. He had risen at 5 a.m. to monitor Columbia's return. "To have this happen with 15 minutes to go until it was over was just unbelievable."

Only a day earlier, he had received an e-mail from his sister about how much she was enjoying her first flight aboard the space shuttle.

"I'm just so glad she got to get up to space and got to see it because that had been a dream for a long time," Salton said.

For Clark's aunt and uncle, Betty and Doug Haviland of Ames, Iowa, this tragedy brought back memories of another. Their son, Timothy, died in the World Trade Center collapse Sept. 11, 2001.

Betty Haviland said her niece was very proud to represent her country. "She had done something in a world usually reserved for men and she was pleased at the opportunity," she added. *Reports from AP and AFP*

No terror strike; probers eye flaw in left wing tiles

From page A1

kph, 18 times the speed of sound, the shuttle was out of range of any surface-to-air missile. And security was extraordinarily tight on this mission because Ilan Ramon, Israel's first astronaut, was among the crew members.

Nasa appointed an independent commission to investigate. Investigators trying to figure out what destroyed the space shuttle focused immediately on the possibility that its thermal tiles were damaged far more seriously than Nasa had realized by a piece of debris during liftoff.

Just a little over a minute into Columbia's launch on Jan. 16, a chunk of insulating foam peeled off from the external fuel tank and smacked into the left wing, which like the rest of the shuttle is covered with tiles to protect the ship from the extreme heat of reentry into the atmosphere.

On Saturday, that same wing started exhibiting sensor failures and other problems 23 minutes before Columbia was scheduled to touch down. With just 16 minutes to go before landing, the shuttle disintegrated over Texas.

"As we look at that now in hindsight ... we can't discount that there might be a connection," shuttle manager Ron Dittemore said on Saturday, hours after the tragedy. "But we have to caution you and ourselves that we can't rush to judgment on it because there are a lot of things in this business that look like the smoking gun but turn out not even to be close."

Just a day earlier, Nasa had given assurances that the launch-day incident was no reason for concern. The space agency did an extensive engineering analysis that included a frame-by-frame examination of the launch video, and concluded that any damage to Columbia's thermal tiles would be minor.

Doomed from start

If the liftoff damage was to blame, the shuttle and its crew of seven may well have been doomed from the start of the mission.

Dittemore said there was nothing that the astronauts could have done in orbit to fix damaged thermal tiles and nothing that flight controllers could have done to safely bring home a severely scarred shuttle.

The shuttle has more than 20,000 black, white or gray thermal tiles made of a carbon composite or silica-glass fibers and attached to the shuttle with silicone adhesive.

Loose, damaged or missing tiles can change the aerodynamics of the ship and allow heat to warp or melt the underlying aluminum airframe, causing nearby tiles to peel off in a chain reaction. If the tiles strip off in large numbers or in crucial spots, a spacecraft can overheat, break up and plunge to Earth in a shower of hot metal, much like Russia's Mir space station did in 2001.

In Columbia's case, the shuttle broke apart while being exposed to the maximum re-entry heat of 1,648 degrees Celsius on the leading edge of the wings.

"I would say that the tiles are the No. 1 candidate" for causing the disaster, said Norm Carlson, a retired Nasa test chief and former launch controller.

Dittemore said the disaster could have been caused instead by a structural failure of some sort. He did not elaborate.

Autopilot

As for other possibilities, however, Nasa said that until the problems with the wing were noticed, everything else appeared to be performing fine. Nasa officials said, for example, that the shuttle was in the proper position when it re-entered the atmosphere on autopilot. Re-entry at too steep an angle can cause a spaceship to burn up.

"My impression is we are going to gather every piece we can find, treat this much like an aircraft incident and see if we can solve the puzzle," Dittemore said. But he warned: "That's not going to be very easy. ... Some evidence may have burned up during re-entry. Other evidence is just spread over such a wide territory that we may never find it."

A California Institute of Technology astronomer, Anthony Beasley, reported seeing a trail of fiery debris behind the shuttle over California. Dittemore said he was unaware of the sighting and would not speculate on what it meant.

If thermal tiles were being ripped off the wing, that would have created drag and the shuttle would have started tilting from the ideal angle of attack. That could have caused the ship to overheat and disintegrate.

The rust-colored foam that covers the shuttle's 46-meter external fuel tank is just lightweight polyurethane, but it can damage the shuttle when the spaceship is hurtling into space at high speed, Carlson said.

Dittemore said that even if the astronauts had gone out on an emergency spacewalk, there was no way a spacewalker could have safely checked under the wings, which bear the brunt of re-entry heat.

And even if they did find damage, "there's nothing that we can do about tile damage once we get to orbit," Dittemore said. "We can't minimize the heating to the point that it would somehow not require a tile."

Nasa did not request help in trying to observe the damaged area with ground telescopes or satellites, in part because it did not believe the pictures would be useful, Dittemore said.

For example, long-distance pictures did not help flight controllers when they wanted to see the tail of space shuttle Discovery during John Glenn's flight in 1998; the door for the drag-chute compartment had fallen off seconds after liftoff.

The shuttle was not equipped with its 15-meter robot arm because it was not needed during this research mission, so the astronauts did not have the option of using the arm's cameras to look at the damage. *Reports from AP and AFP*

Crew a picture of cultural and ethnic diversity

SHUTTLE COLUMBIA'S CREW

RICK HUSBAND
- born 7/12/57
- shuttle commander
- flew Discovery in '99, logging 235 hours

WILLIAM McCOOL
- born 9/23/61
- shuttle pilot
- 2,800 hours flight experience

KALPANA CHAWLA
- engineer and commercial pilot
- logged over 376 hours in space

ILAN RAMON
- born 6/20/45
- payload specialist
- first Israeli in space

LAUREL CLARK
- Navy commander and physician
- first NASA shuttle voyage

DAVID BROWN
- born 4/16/56
- Navy captain and surgeon
- first space flight

MICHAEL ANDERSON
- born 12/25/59
- science hardware
- flew aboard Endeavour in '98

From page A1

He made up his mind as a child that that was what he was going to do with his life.

"It's been pretty much a lifelong dream and just a thrill to be able to get to actually live it out," he said in an interview before Columbia's launch, his second space flight.

His previous shuttle voyage was a 10-day mission that docked with the International Space Station and delivered supplies in preparation for the arrival of the first crew to live aboard the orbiting outpost in 1999.

He piloted that flight, logging 235 hours, 13 minutes in space.

He enjoyed singing, water and snow skiing and cycling.

Israeli war veteran

Ilan Ramon, an Israeli Air Force colonel, was the first Israeli to go into space. At 48, he was a veteran of Israel's Yom Kippur War in 1973 and, as a pilot, he took part in Israel's 1981 bombing of Iraq's nuclear reactor at Osirak which set back Baghdad's quest for nuclear weapons by years.

He was the son of a Holocaust survivor from the Auschwitz concentration camp. In memory of family members who died under Nazi rule during the World War II, Ramon took with him a pencil drawing by a Czech Jewish boy.

Ramon logged more than 3,000 flight hours on the Israeli A-4, Mirage III-C, and F-4, and more than 1,000 flight hours on the F-16.

Selected by Nasa as a payload specialist in 1997, Ramon began training in July 1998. Before Columbia launched, Ramon had repeatedly said he was not nervous or afraid about his safety aboard the space shuttle.

"I think the only thing that will worry me is the launch sequence and the systems and the launch, being launched on time. The tenseness is there because everybody wants to be launched on time with no failures. That's it. Once you're there, you're there," he said in a recent interview.

Born June 20, 1954, in Tel Aviv, Israel, Ramon was married with four children.

Shuttle pilot William C. McCool, a US Navy commander, was on his first shuttle voyage aboard Columbia, but had wide experience as a military aircraft pilot with more than 2,800 hours of flight experience in 24 aircraft.

A test pilot at the Strike Aircraft Test Directorate at Patuxent River, Maryland, McCool managed projects ranging from airframe fatigue life studies to avionics upgrades. He acted as test pilot of the EA-6B Prowler, a radar-jamming warplane.

His primary efforts, however, were dedicated to flight test of the Advanced Capability EA-6B.

He was selected by Nasa in 1996. Married, McCool was born Sept. 23, 1961, in San Diego, California. He was a former Eagle Scout who enjoyed running, mountain biking, camping, swimming, and playing guitar and chess.

African American

Shuttle payload Commander Michael Anderson, a US Air Force lieutenant colonel and former flight instructor, was responsible for science hardware aboard Columbia.

The African-American joined the astronaut corps in 1994 and previously flew aboard shuttle Endeavor in 1998, the eighth docking mission between a space shuttle and the Soviet-made Mir spacecraft. He logged over 211 hours in space on that voyage.

Anderson was in charge of Columbia's dozens of science experiments.

"I take the risk because I think what we're doing is really important. If you look at this research flight and if you really take an opportunity to look at each experiment ... the potential yield that we have is really tremendous," he said.

He added: "For me, it's the fact that what I'm doing can have great consequences and great benefits for everyone, for mankind."

Born in Plattsburgh, New York, on Dec. 25, 1959, Anderson counted Spokane, Washington, as his hometown. He was married and loved chess, photography and tennis.

Gymnast

David Brown, a US Navy captain and surgeon, was a gymnast who performed in the Circus Kingdom as an acrobat, a 7-foot unicyclist and stilt walker while attending college.

Brown joined the Navy after his medical internship, and after completing flight surgeon training in 1984, became director of medical services at the Navy Branch Hospital in Adak, Alaska.

A naval aviator, he logged more than 2,700 flight hours with 1,700 in high performance military aircraft. The Columbia mission was his first space flight. He joined the astronaut program in 1996.

Born April 16, 1956, in Arlington, Virginia, Brown was unmarried.

Indian heroine

Kalpana Chawla, an aerospace engineer and commercial pilot, was on her second space shuttle flight, having been a mission specialist in 1996, logging more than 376 hours in space.

Born in Karnal, India, she studied aeronautical engineering at Punjab Engineering College in Punjab in India. She immigrated to the United States, and received a master's and then a doctorate in aerospace engineering from the University of Colorado.

She started working for Nasa in 1988, studying powered-lift computational fluid dynamics. Her research concentrated on simulation of complex air flows encountered around aircraft.

Chawla joined the astronaut program in 1994 and was was the most experienced astronaut on the mission.

Chawla was a heroine in India, which has launched satellites for years and is preparing for a moon orbit this decade. One Indian news agency even tracked Columbia's flight so it could tell readers the exact minute they could wave to the skies to hail their countrywoman.

On her only other space flight, in 1997, she made mistakes that sent science satellite tumbling out of control. Other astronauts had to go on spacewalk to capture it.

"I stopped thinking about it after trying to figure out what are the lessons learned, and there are so many," she said. "After I had basically sorted that out, I figured it's time to really look at the future and not at the past."

She served as Columbia's mission specialist. She enjoyed flying aerobatics, hiking and backpacking.

Commander-doctor

Laurel Blair Clark, 41, a US Navy commander, was on her first Nasa shuttle voyage as a mission specialist.

Clark did active duty training with the Diving Medicine Department at the Naval Experimental Diving Unit during medical school. During a later assignment in Scotland, she dove with US Navy divers and Naval Special Warfare Unit Two Seals and performed numerous medical evacuations from US submarines. She was designated a Naval Submarine Medical Office and Diving Medical Officer. and a Naval Flight Surgeon.

A zoology graduate as well as a doctor of medicine, Clark was selected for the astronaut corps in 1996.

"I think my family has a fairly practical and pragmatic view of this whole thing, and that's that the actual launching into space is much more dangerous than any of the other security concerns," said Clark.

She was married with one child. She was born in Iowa but called Racine, Wisconsin, her hometown. Her birth date was not immediately available.

She enjoyed scuba diving, hiking and parachuting.

Inquirer wires

'Columbia is lost; there are no survivors'

FOLLOWING is a timeline of events in the last flight of space shuttle Columbia. All times EST [for GMT time, add five hours]. Source: Nasa:

- Jan. 16, 10:39 a.m.: Columbia rockets into orbit from Kennedy Space Center.
- Feb. 1, 8:15 a.m.: Columbia fires braking rockets, streaks toward touchdown.
- 8:53 a.m.: Nasa loses temperature measurements for shuttle's left hydraulic system.
- 8:58 a.m.: Nasa loses measurements from three temperature sensors on shuttle's left side.
- 8:59 a.m.: Nasa loses eight more temperature measures and pressure measures for left inboard and outboard tires. One of the measurements remains visible to crew on a display panel; which crew acknowledges.
- 8:59 a.m.: Final transmission. Mission Control radios: "Columbia, Houston, we see your tire pressure messages and we did not copy your last." Columbia replies: "Roger, uh, ..."
- 9 a.m.: Nasa loses all data and contact with Columbia at 207,135 feet (62,140 meters).
- 9 a.m.: Residents of Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana report hearing "a big bang" and seeing flames in the sky.
- 9:16 a.m.: Columbia's scheduled landing time.
- 9:29 a.m.: Nasa declares an emergency.
- 9:44 a.m.: Nasa warns residents to stay away from possibly hazardous debris.
- 11 a.m.: Kennedy Space Center lowers flag to half-staff.
- 2:05 p.m.: President George W. Bush announces: "Columbia is lost; there are no survivors."

Shirtless ban to go Metro-wide

From page A1

women, even children—in the streets.

The chair of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority yesterday said he was planning to implement metro-wide the controversial Marikina ordinance that bans citizens from venturing into public areas half-naked. Or half-clothed, for the sake of argument.

"We will soon get there," said Fernando, referring to a Metro Manila devoid of topless thugs showing off tattoos. "Only then can we say we're civilized."

In the interest of fairness, even those indisposed or unwilling—by virtue of gender, career orientation, cultural upbringing or religious persuasion (expansion ours)—to sport tattoos would be exempt from the shirtless ban under any circumstance.

They go out there with a lot less fabric than skin above the waist, they get more than wolf whistles.

Going by the Marikina ordinance that took effect when he was mayor, Fernando said nothing, not even sweltering heat, should be a license for anyone of any age, shape and size to step out of the house in such a state of undress.

In May last year, Marikina police arrested three men for strolling topless along J.P. Rizal Street, Barangay Nangka. The violators claimed ignorance of City Ordinance No. 74. Still, they were fined P40 each and given a warning.

Fernando conceded that the policy and all the attendant good intentions stood to fail unless residents first saw tangible improvements in their physical environment.

"The people should realize the wisdom of what we're trying to do," he said. "They should agree that there's a need to put our society in order."

Yet to be worked out is the equation: kerosene treatment for the vendors, demolition squads for the squatters, (bottoms off), for the un-shirted?

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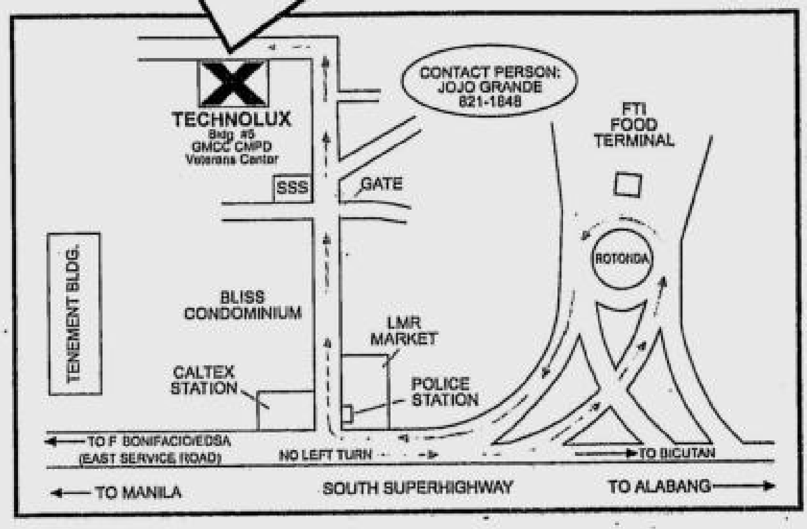

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SPORTS
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Marquez, Hernandez prevail

LAS VEGAS—Juan Manuel Marquez and Carlos Hernandez became IBF champions Saturday night. Marquez stopped four-time champion Manuel Medina at 1 minute, 18 seconds of the seventh round at Mandalay Bay to win the vacant featherweight championship. Hernandez won the junior lightweight championship on a unanimous decision over David Santos in a fight stopped at 2:52 of the eighth round because of a deep gash around Santos' right eye. *AP*

TWO-YEAR DEAL

Coke signs up driver's son for ₱3.26M

HUGNATAN

By Dennis U. Eroa

REYNEL Hugnatan, a driver's son from Talisay in Bacolod, finally agreed to a two-year contract worth P3.26-million with Coca Cola, the team which made him the ninth pick in the first round of the 2003 PBA Draft.

"I'm glad it's over," said the 6-foot-5 Hugnatan, who saw action for the Negros Slashers in the now-defunct MBA and ICTSI-La Salle in the PBL.

This development left John Ferriols as the lone big name who has yet to ink an agreement with the team which picked him.

The 6-foot-4 Ferriols, a former MBA MVP, was FedEx's first pick in the second round. He told the INQUIRER that he wants a three-year contract and is confident that he'll come to terms with the Express early next week.

"I haven't signed anything yet, but I'm confident everything will turn out fine," Ferriols said.

Hugnatan will receive P130,000 monthly in his first year and will get a P20,000 increase in his second year.

Meanwhile, Blustar (formerly Blu) Detergent owner Dioceldo Sy is expected to run unopposed as chair when the PBL board holds its annual election on Feb.4 at the Westin Philippine Plaza.

Sy has been on top for the past three years and his partnership with Commissioner Chino Trinidad resulted in the PBL's new found success.

"I'll be glad to lead the PBL as it tries to attain another banner year. The support of the board is simply overwhelming," Sy told the INQUIRER.

Aside from the election, the board will also discuss the proposal of Commissioner Trinidad to make the PBL go regional in the coming conference tentatively scheduled on March 15.

Sy has already expressed his support to Trinidad's proposal, which aims to widen the league's fans base.

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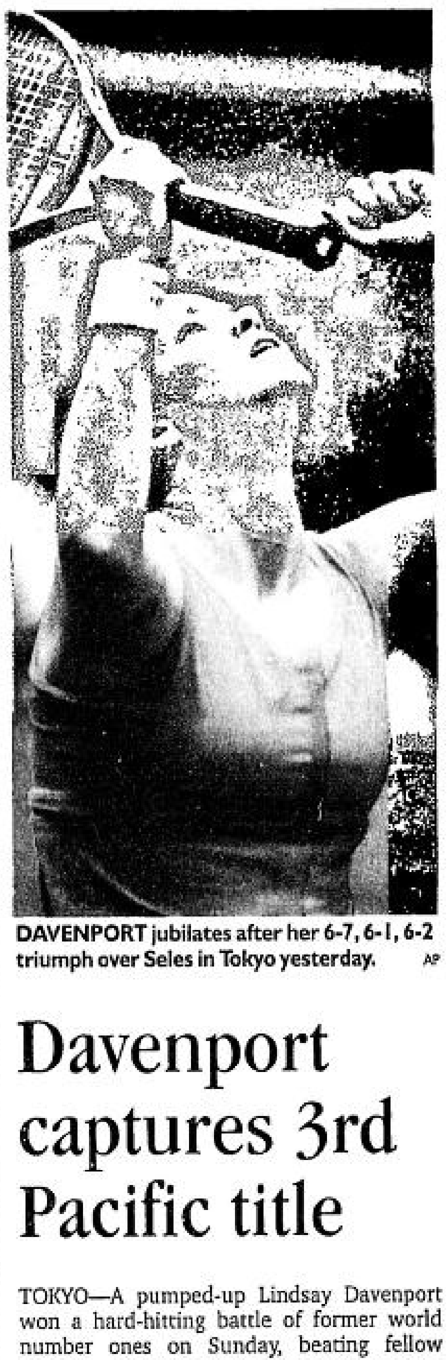


DAVENPORT jubilates after her 6-7, 6-1, 6-2 triumph over Seles in Tokyo yesterday. AP

Davenport captures 3rd Pacific title

TOKYO—A pumped-up Lindsay Davenport won a hard-hitting battle of former world number ones on Sunday, beating fellow American Monica Seles 6-7, 6-1, 6-2 to win her third Pan Pacific Open crown.

Third seed Davenport, chasing her first WTA Tour title since October 2001, hit back after losing the first-set tiebreak 8-6 to storm through the second set in just 28 minutes in front of a sell-out crowd at Tokyo Metropolitan Gymnasium.

Seles, runner-up to Martina Hingis here last year, tried desperately to stop the rot but, after trading breaks early in the third set, the top seed was buried under a blizzard of aces and passing shots from Davenport.

Davenport and fellow-American Lisa Raymond were later beaten 6-3, 6-4 in the doubles final by Russian Elena Bovina and Australia's Rennae Stubbs.

A demoralized Seles suffered a meltdown in the next game, committing two double faults to gift-wrap the seventh game to Davenport, who won the title here in 1998 and 2001. *Reuters*

One-legged runner, coach HK-bound

ONE-LEGGED triathlete Rudy Fernandez and his coach, veteran internationalist and race director Raffy Uytiepo, will see action in the Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon, which fires off on Feb. 16 in Kowloon, Hong Kong. Fernandez and Uytiepo also joined last year's edition of the race together with SEA Games marathon champions Roy Vence and Cristabel Martes. Vence will be returning to Hong Kong with last year's adidas King of the Road champion Allan Ballester while Martes is skipping the race due to injury.

Fernandez and Uytiepo were the most applauded runners last year owing to Fernandez being an amputee. Fernandez's photo is also splashed in this year's registration forms, which is circulated worldwide.

The duo's trip is supported by Philippine Airlines, Standard Chartered Bank, adidas, Pharmaton, Timex, Rudy Project, Casa Ilongga, Philippine Sports Commission and the city government of Iloilo under Mayor Jerry Trenas.

NBA ROUNDUP

Pacers, Wizards subdue opponents

Jordan sizzles with 45 pts

INDIANAPOLIS—All-Star Jermaine O'Neal led five Indiana players in double figures, collecting 33 points to help the Pacers defeat the Boston Celtics 109-100 in the NBA Saturday.

Fellow All-Star Brad Miller had 21 points while grabbing a game-high 12 rebounds, and Reggie Miller also had a double-double as the Pacers improved to 22-2 at home.

Indiana was without coach Isiah Thomas, who was handed a two-game suspension by the NBA for his part in a skirmish during the 102-90 loss to the Toronto Raptors Friday. Assistant Brendan Malone called the shots for the Pacers.

Paul Pierce notched 29 points and 10 boards for the Celtics and was two assists shy of a triple-double.

Antoine Walker added 22 points for the Celtics, who slumped to their worst-ever loss when they were destroyed 118-66 by the Detroit Pistons Friday.

In Washington, Michael Jordan turned back the clock, pouring in a season-high 45 points for the Wizards in a 109-104 win over the New Orleans Hornets.

Jordan, who earlier in the week turned down several invitations to start in the All-Star Game, was 18-of-33 from the field.

The All-Star Game in Atlanta Feb. 9 would have been the last for Jordan, who turns 40 eight days later.

Bryon Russell was next best for Washington with 13 points.

Jamal Mashburn topped the Hornets with 39 points and eight boards.

Jerry Stackhouse, who leads the Wizards in scoring, sat out the game with a bad groin.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant chalked up 42 points as the Lakers defeated the Utah Jazz 99-87.

The Jazz were playing their third game without suspended coach Jerry Sloan and their fourth in five nights.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 21 points for the Lakers while hauling in 13 rebounds. Karl Malone gained 26 points and nine boards for weary Utah.

The Lakers improved to 22-23, just one win away from coach Phil Jackson's goal of playing .500 ball by next weekend's All-Star break.

In Detroit, Chauncey Billups had 20 first-quarter points on the way to a total of 27 as the Pistons romped to a 106-84 victory over the Jason Kidd-less New Jersey Nets.

Richard Hamilton was next best for Detroit, notching 24 points.

New Jersey's Kenyon Martin had a season-best 29 points and 15 rebounds. Brian Scalabrine chipped in with 16 points as the Nets, 21-2 at home, slipped to 11-13 on the road.

The Nets have won just three times in their last 28 trips to Detroit.

In Miami, reigning MVP Tim Duncan pulled down 25 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs edged the Heat 67-65.

Duncan also racked up 17 points, one less than team mate Tony Parker. Eddie Jones notched 17 to top Miami, which shot less than 30 percent.

The Heat, who are bottom of the Atlantic Division, have dropped 12 of their last 16 games.

In Milwaukee, Sam Cassell was one of six members of his team in double figures as the Bucks outlasted the New York Knicks 107-100.

Cassell counted 24 points and Michael Redd added 22 points, 12 in the final period. Allan Houston paced New York with 31.

The Bucks picked up where they left off in January, when they went 10-4 to climb a game above .500.

In Dallas, a 40-16 third quarter propelled the Mavericks to an easy 122-100 victory over the lowly Denver Nuggets, who slipped to 3-21 on the road.

Former Nugget Nick Van Exel was almost perfect from the floor, going 11-for-13 for a game-high 30 points. He was also 7-of-9 from three-point territory.

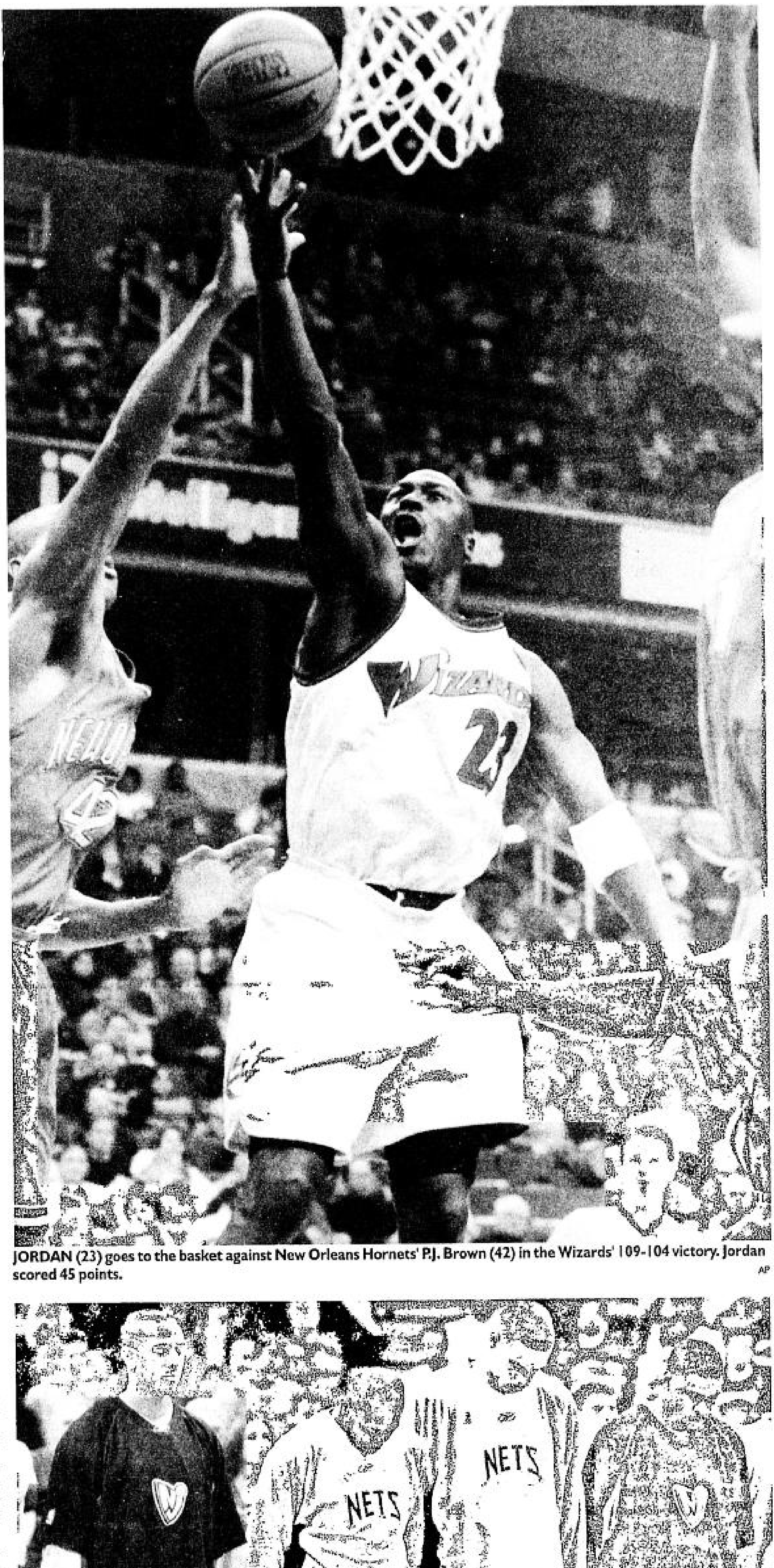
Michael Finley added 22 points and Dirk Nowitzki 20. Rodney White had 17 to top Denver.

Reuters

COMPLETE RESULTS

Detroit 106, New Jersey 84; Washington 109, New Orleans 104; Indiana 109, Boston 100; San Antonio 67, Miami 65; Milwaukee 107, New York 100; Dallas 122, Denver 100; Phoenix 116, Golden State 107; Seattle 90, Chicago 77; LA Lakers 99, Utah 87.

AFP



JORDAN (23) goes to the basket against New Orleans Hornets' P.J. Brown (42) in the Wizards' 109-104 victory. Jordan scored 45 points.

AP

Ernie snares Classic

MELBOURNE—Defending champion Ernie Els won the Heineken Classic by one stroke on Sunday to complete his third tournament victory from four starts this year.

South African Els carded rounds of 70, 72, 66 and 65 for a four-round total of 15-under-par 273.

Overnight leader and six times major winner Nick Faldo tied for second with Australia's Peter Lonard on 14-under-par 274.

Lonard, who had a 68, missed a three-yard putt for par on the par-four 18th hole which would have forced a playoff with Els. Faldo, 45, carded a final round of 69.

The Heineken Classic at the Royal Melbourne Golf Club is co-sanctioned by the European and Australasian Tours.

Five players, Britons Stephen Gallacher, Gary Evans, David Lynn and Paul Casey, and Denmark's Soren Kjeldsen, tied for fourth place, three shots behind Els on 12-under-par 276.

"I think what I said on Friday was hopefully I would get something going," Els told reporters. "That's what happened. I got something going. It just happened quite extraordinarily."

Els said he had gained momentum with a downhill putt for birdie on the par-four 13th hole, followed by another birdie on the 14th, part of eight for the round plus a bogey on the par-four sixth.

Reuters

Tigers rout Express in PBA pre-season

MALOLOS—Coca-Cola was good to the last drop in a PBA pre-season game versus FedEx last night at the CEU Centrodome here.

The Tigers pummeled the hapless Express in a 101-77 rout that underscored Coca-Cola's eagerness and excitement to defend the All-Filipino crown in the coming PBA wars.

That the Tigers did it minus several key players also spoke well of their capability to do a title repeat.

Jeffrey Cariaso, Johnny Abarientos, Estong Ballesteros, Freddie Abuda and Chris Bolado skipped the game as they're nursing different injuries.

But the Coca-Cola shocktroopers plus a couple of aspirants in Jeck Chia and Rob Wainwright still proved too much for FedEx, which also played without key players Yancy de Ocampo and Joh Ferriols. Ryan Bernardo sat out the final half after a bad fall in the second quarter.

Former MBA star Reynel Hugnatan, the No. 7 overall pick in the recent draft, scored 20 points to pace the Tigers who also drew double-digit outputs from Poch Juinio and Rafi Reavis.

THE NEW Jersey Nets line up for a moment of silence for the lost US space shuttle Columbia before the start of their NBA game against the Detroit Pistons Saturday at the Palace of Auburn Hills, Michigan. From left are: Lucious Harris, Anthony Johnson, Aaron Williams and Brandon Armstrong.

AFP

Herron leads Hope Classic

LA QUINTA, California—Tim Herron, the roly-poly golfer who's discovered a superb touch on the greens, shot a 7-under-par 65 to open a four-stroke lead in the Bob Hope Classic.

Herron, coming off a 61 a day earlier, went to 29 under through four rounds of the five-day tournament Saturday. *AP*

Gatchalian, pal rule Shaw tilt

BUSINESS tycoon William Gatchalian and his guest partner Angel Umali assembled a net 26-under-par 190 aggregate for two days to capture the overall title in the 14th annual Bill Shaw Memorial Golf Classic presented by Samsung at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club over the weekend.

Gatchalian and Umali scored a 62 in scramble play at the east course then returned the next day to submit a whopping 128 at the west course, winning by two net strokes over Jesus Montemayor-Cesar Hernandez in the tourney fully supported by electronics giant Samsung.

Montemayor-Hernandez, who had 62-130-192, settled for the Group II crown finishing far ahead of Renato Magadia and Boy Ampil (62-134-196) in a competition that featured 185 member-guest teams which vied for prizes totalling more than P2 million.

The 217 posted by Gary Go and Damas Wong won them the prestigious low gross award. The other winners were Bong Tan and Marvin Dy in Group I and Pacifico Villaluz-Julio Templonuevo in Group III.

Bing Liboro-Therese Dabao won the accompanying Ladies Bill Shaw with their 62-135-197 effort, pushing them four strokes ahead of Veronica Veloso and Medy Agustin in the final standings.

Comelec chair Ben Abalos, chair of the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, and Tonichi Tuason, chair of the sports and games committee, awarded the prizes to the winners, including Vic Sianghio Jr. who went home with night's grand raffle prize, a Tudor hydronaut watch.

The Toyota Camry put up by Toyota-Otis, the two Mitsubishi Lancer GLS 1600s and Yamaha cart staked by Kart Plaza Manufacturing as hole-in-one prizes were not won.

Major sponsors for the event were the First Gentleman Foundation Inc., Golforce, Custom Clubmakers and Unilever Philippines as major sponsors, Caltex Havoline, Splash, Pacific Paint and Oil Mfg., Citra Metro Tollways, Synergymed, PLDT, PCSO, Beauty Exponents, PICP, Gema Coco Food Corp., Matsushita Phils., GG&A Club Shares, lawyer Gilberto Duavit, Immuvit Multivitamins, Standard Chartered Bank, Del Monte, GNC, Gatorade, Pacsports, Forest Hills, Air Philippines, Discovery Suites, The South Spa, Nestle Phils., and The Plaza came in as hole sponsors.

Tan-Dy netted 194 to beat Elphege Wong and Seve Liao by one in Group I and Villaluz-Templonuevo had a 195 to win by three over Arsenio Bartolome-Jimmy Bautista.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1992, Cassius Casas fired a 3-under-par 69 to post a seven-stroke victory in the President's Cup at the Luisita course in San Miguel, Tarlac. Also today in 1993, Alex Reyes III and Leonardo Ding Roman notched 84 points to snare the team event of the 4th Bill Shaw Memorial Classic at Wack Wack's east and west courses.

Bondoc, Young share Samsung Putting Challenge top honors

GENE Bondoc stood out among the grand finalists with the consistency that held up until the last putt, winning the recent Samsung Putting Challenge in runaway fashion at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

The lanky Bondoc, a former national player, submitted a couple of 15s for a two-round total of 30 out of a possible 36 that gave him a four-stroke victory over Cebu qualifier Keenan Ugarte and jungolf star Jayvie Agojo.

The day, however, belonged to businessman Wilbert Young who made the putt of a lifetime in the Challenge sponsored by Samsung.

Young, a 44-year-old White Plains resident operating a food service distribution business, found the right break and touch in the hole-in-contest to bag a prize of his choice.

For his feat, Young can choose from either a Kia Pride car, its cash equivalent or a Samsung appliance showcase.

"It was just a lucky putt, I belive it was really meant for me," said Young, a 20-handicapper who was among a select field of 50 players who gave themselves a crack at the prize by sinking one putts on a designated hole during the seven-leg elimination series.

Bondoc went home with a Samsung prize bonanza made up of a TV set, a home theater DVD and a True I cellular phone.

Ugarte edged Agojo in the countback for the jungolf title, one of three division honors which were contested by the 70 finalists that also included world jungolf champ Dottie Ardina with the winners all given a 21-inch TV set each.

Edsel Dagdagan placed fourth to clinch the men's division title while Riviera president Danny Pizarro wound up tied for fifth to capture the seniors crown while Ia Bakunawa was crowned the ladies division winner.

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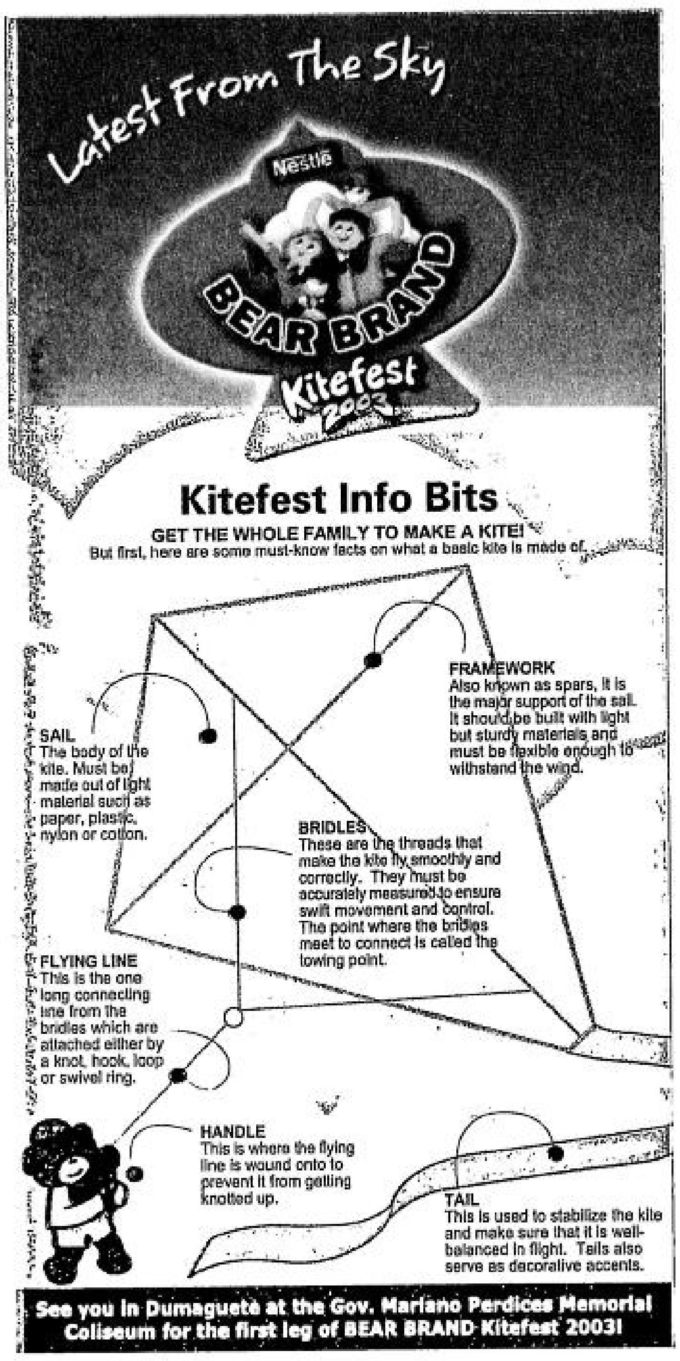
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Kitefest Info Bits
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Also known as spars, it is the major support of the sail. It should be built with light but sturdy materials and must be flexible enough to withstand the wind.

SAIL
The body of the kite. Must be made out of light material such as paper, plastic, nylon or cotton.

BRIDLES
These are the threads that make the kite fly smoothly and correctly. They must be accurately measured to ensure swift movement and control. The point where the bridles meet to connect is called the towing point.

FLYING LINE
This is the one long connecting line from the bridles which are attached either by a knot, hook, loop or swivel ring.

HANDLE
This is where the flying line is wound onto to prevent it from getting knotted up.

TAIL
This is used to stabilize the kite and make sure that it is well-balanced in flight. Tails also serve as decorative accents.

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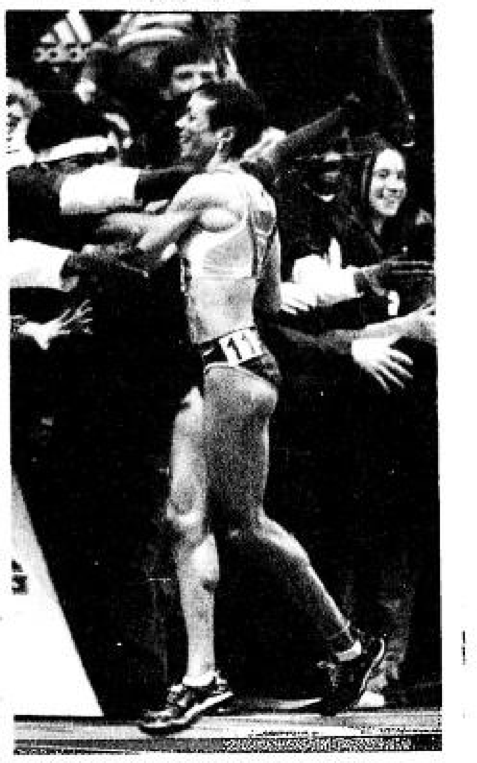
Old athletics mark ripped

BOSTON—Regina Jacobs became the first woman to break four minutes in the indoor 1,500 meters, upstaging the successful returns of Olympic champions Maurice Greene and Stacy Dragila in the Boston Indoor Games.

Jacobs finished in 3 minutes, 59.98 seconds Saturday to break the 13-year-old world record of 4:00.27 set by Romanian Doina Melinte on Feb. 9, 1990. Mary Slaney held the American record of 4:00.80 for 23 years.



REGINA Jacobs celebrates with the crowd after her world-record time of 3 minutes, 59.98 seconds in the women's 1,500 meters during the Boston Indoor Games in Boston, Saturday. AP

"I had 16 weeks of the best training ever, and I knew it was possible, but you never know," said Jacobs, 39, the 1995 world champion and a four-time Olympic qualifier. "You have to set it up and hope that the running gods are smiling on you."

Dragila, the Olympic champion in the women's pole vault, cleared 4.71 meters (15 feet, 5 1/2 inches) for an American record. Dragila missed in three tries at 4.76 meters (15-7 1/4) in a bid to break Russian Svetlana Feofanova's world record of 4.75 meters (15-7).

Greene finished in 6.52 seconds– short of his world record of 6.39 but enough to beat the 6.56 by Jon Drummond, his training partner and teammate on the 2000 Olympics gold medal-winning 400 relay team.

Greene, who won two gold medals in the Sydney Olympics to go with his 1999 world indoor title in the 60, won for the first time since July 19. He did not compete indoors last season and struggled outdoors due to personal problems that include the death of several family members.

"I'm getting the rust off," Greene said. "I think it was a pretty good race for my first real competition of the year. But I still have a lot of work to do." *AP*

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Roligon meet on tomorrow

ROLIGON Mega cockpit is regaining its reputation as the mecca of cockers nationwide as provincial entries continue to pour in for the 13th Anniversary 5-Cock Derby on Feb. 4 and 6.

Hosted by Rolly Ligon and supported by Thunderbird Platinum High Protein Conditioning Pellets and Ninja Gamefowl Feeds, the two-day event offers a guaranteed prize of P1 million. Entry fee is P8,800.

Submission of weights is today (Feb. 3), from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. The champion with the fastest winning time gets a brand new Honda motorcycle or it's cash equivalent of P50,000.

Regional cocking stars include Blandy Tolentino and Pep Goitia of Laguna, Butchoy Ang of Cagayan de Oro, Bobby Seelin of Bataan, Rep. Lawrence Wacnang of Kalinga, Julie Cui of Quezon, Enrique Go of Bulacan, Dong Lacson of Iloilo, Eddie Aparri of Batangas, Ronald Barandino of Basilan, Bobby Fernandez of Zamboanga, Joli Pelayo of Nueva Ecija, Gov. Raul Molintas of Benguet, Gov. DV Savellano of Ilocos Sur and Felimon Asperin of La Union.

Also sure to compete are Brendo and Tito, Jessie Magtira, Col. Odelon Ramoneda, Tony Chan, Louie Tolentino, Engr. Tony Uy, Francis Rodriguez, Fiscal Jun Carad, Vic Vigilia, Alex Tan, Cris Delgado, Franco Baluyot, Alex Manarang, Dr. Manny Gasconia, Felipe Rubi, Danny Itchon, Dr. Antonio Mabanta, Virgilio Manguera, Lito Alacantara, Abraham Bernales, Eddie dela Rama and Lawrence Tan.

Roligon manager Roming Vergara will assist in all hackfight and derbies.

For more details, contact 833-2275 and 833-1638.

Weigh-in today

OFFICIAL entries to the 4th UCAP Bumble Bee Balbina/Pandor Magic 7-Cock Derby must be submitted today (Feb. 3) at the Mandaluyong Coliseum. Entries will be accepted from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The two-day cockfest, a gathering of well-known bigtime cockers from all over the country, will be held tomorrow and on Thursday (Feb. 4 and 6).

Derby hosts are former ambassador Danding Cojuangco and Maj. Bobby Doromal. Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer, Sagupaan Mite Free, Complexor 3000 and Lakpue Drug Inc.

Aside from UCAP and LGBA members, also invited are cockers from Negros Occidental, Iloilo, Tarlac, Pampanga and Zambales like Fernando Diaz, Otic Geroso, Jun Marasigan, Vic Boy, Gerry Ramos, Mayor Jessie Viceo, Sandy Javier, Esting Teopaco and Mayor Charlie Cojuangco.

Meanwhile, preparations were launched yesterday in connection with the 8-Cock Derby on March 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15, a major cockfest offering a brand new Mercedes Benz to the champion.

An insurance prize of P1 million awaits any six pointers while the runner-up finisher gets P100,000. The champion handler and gaffer gets 500,000 and P50,000 respectively.

For more details, call 531-4003, 531-4005, 535-2341 and 534-4110.

Sorsogon hosts int'l hobie meet

DONSOL, Sorsogon—For the very first time, the Bicol Region will host an international sailing competition featuring local and international competitors who will be traveling in 40 boats of different sizes starting from here today to Cebu City.

The competition will start at the town's coast and proceed to the Calintas Island, the Balanguinge Island, Sambauan Island and Calamangan Island, and will finish at the Alegre Beach Resort in Cebu City.

Mark Haswell, president of the Philippine Hobie Challenge Foundation and organizer of this year's event, said they chose the coastal areas of Donsol town due to its strategic location.

About 50 international and 50 local competitors arrived yesterday.

Participants will have a chance to watch the world famous *butanding* (whale shark) today.

According to Haswell, foreign participants will be coming from Australia, Europe, Saipan, China, US, and Hong Kong.

He said he himself started as a competitor during the event's launching in 2000 in Lucena City, which wound up in Boracay. *Ronnie Lorejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

NCA derby resumes at Araneta today

THE WINNERS of the recent World Slasher International Cup, including leading Filipino cocker-breeders see action at the resumption of the NCA (National Cockers Association) 7-Cock Derby today and Wednesday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Among those taking part are Big Dome owner Nene Araneta of Thunderbird fame, Danding Cojuangco (Bumble Bee Balbina), James Chiongbian (King Cobra/Sarangani), Peping Cojuangco and Esting Teopaco (Cat Stingers), World Slasher champions Claude Bautista combined with Ito Ynares (R&B Farm Binangonan I), William Go (Gold Cup Jed and Joy), Pol Estrellado and Manny Santos (Jade LCC), NCA back-to-back Cocker of the Year Jun Santiago (Firefly Group), Dicky Lim (Winslet) and Frank Berin (Mulawin).

Also in the fold are Eddie and Bomboy Araneta, Rudy Albano, Alex and Gerry Escalona, Tos and Charlie Reyes, Mario Villamor and Boy Jiao, Louie Cua, the Madlambayan and Jingco brothers of Pampanga, Gerry Ramos, John Capinpin, Edgar Santos, Ruel Ricafort, Negros Occidental's Johnny Jalandoni, Boy Velez, Eddie Boy Ledesma and Boy Nilo Lizares, Alex Tan of Cebu, Boy Primalion and Arthur and Bebot Uy of Mindanao and derby hosts Tony Tan, Jessie Viceo, Tony Marfori, Pepito Ngo and Philip Menez.

Football fields need facelift

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

I AM deeply sad that the sport of football, which is tailor-made for medium-built Filipinos, hardly gets special treatment from the local media like basketball, a game where we can never, ever expect to win international glory now or in the near future mainly because it is a sport where height is might.

But despite the lack of media hype, football remains alive and a source of pride and fascination to a number of people addicted to it, including avid supporters of the Coke Go-For-Goal program, a nationwide under-16 football tournament which was launched in 1984, with 80 teams competing. Today, under the guidance of lawyer Rene Adad, a marketing expert of Coca-Cola and currently president of the Philippine Football Federation, more than 400 teams are taking active part in the tournament while more than 120,000 youngsters have played in it since its inception 19 years ago.

On Feb. 9-13, the six regional champions from Luzon (Ateneo de Manila and Masbate Comprehensive High School), Visayas (Cebu's Don Bosco Technology and San Miguel Municipal High of Bacong, Dumaguete) and Mindanao (La Salle Academy of Iligan and Ateneo de Davao) clash in the national Coke Go-For-Goal finals in Dumaguete City.

Why Dumaguete and not Metro Manila? According to many, Dumaguete was chosen, among other factors, because it is not only a hotbed of fooball, but also because of its world-class facilities unlike Metro Manila where the fans are not known to be keen devotees of the sport, not to mention that the two more popular football fields in the Metropolis–the Rizal Memorial Track-Football Stadium in Manila and the Philsports oval in Pasig–are ill-maintained. Worse, repairs of the two venues could not be immediately undertaken for the simple reason that the government agency in charge of both venues, the Philippine Sports Commission, is broke, a fact admitted by PSC chair Eric Buhain himself.

Now on its 19th season, Coke Go-For-Goal does not promise instant fame or fortune. But it offers the reward of a continuing focus on character-building like sportmanship, discipline and fair play among these young football players, most of whom come from impoverished public schools which otherwise cannot afford to have their own sports development programs.

***

LETTER FROM FR. PAUL. Here are excerpts from a letter sent by Fr. Paul de Vera of St. Benedict College in Alabang.

"The proposal to transfer the now 'ancient' RMSC (Rizal Memorial Complex in Manila) to Muntinlupa City is most welcome. As mentioned in your column it is greatly accessible. For the many years I was connected with NCAA Manila, the management committee led by Amang Lopez met not once but on several occasions with past PSC chairs Mequi, Hechanova, Tuason and brought up the idea of the great need for a new sports complex. We then mentioned as possible site the reclaimed area along Roxas Boulevard. Unfortunately, nothing came out of it.We hope that the present PSC chair Eric Buhain and other sports leaders will seriously consider the construction of a new sports complex. We need first class facilities to have world-class athletes. We should keep on harping for a new RMSC. Who knows? One day a fairy godfather might pick up the bill."

SPORTSTV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: 17th ABC Championship for Junior Men 2002, 10 a.m. (r), Star Sports
NBA - Philadelphia vs Minnesota, 7 p.m., IBC 13
2002 Reebok Cross Straits Basketball, 5:30 p.m., ESPN
AMERICAN FOOTBALL: NFL Pro Bowl, 6:30 a.m. (r - 8:30 p.m.), ESPN

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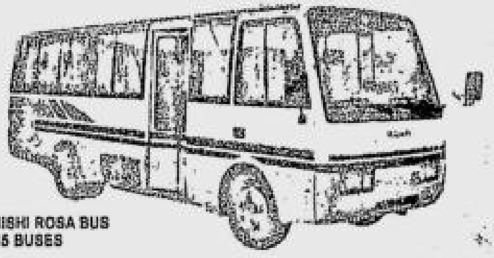

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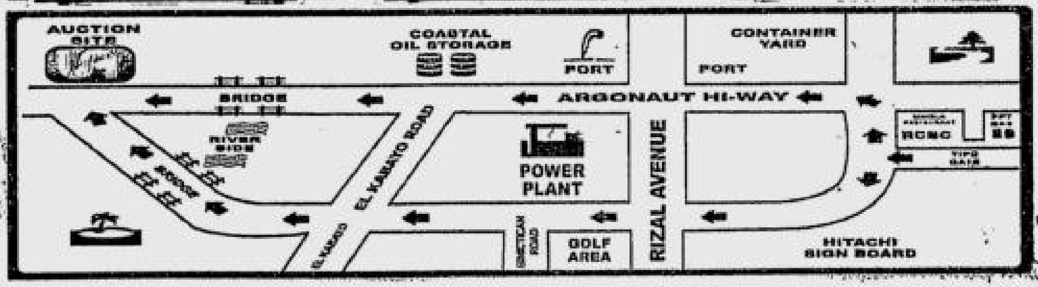

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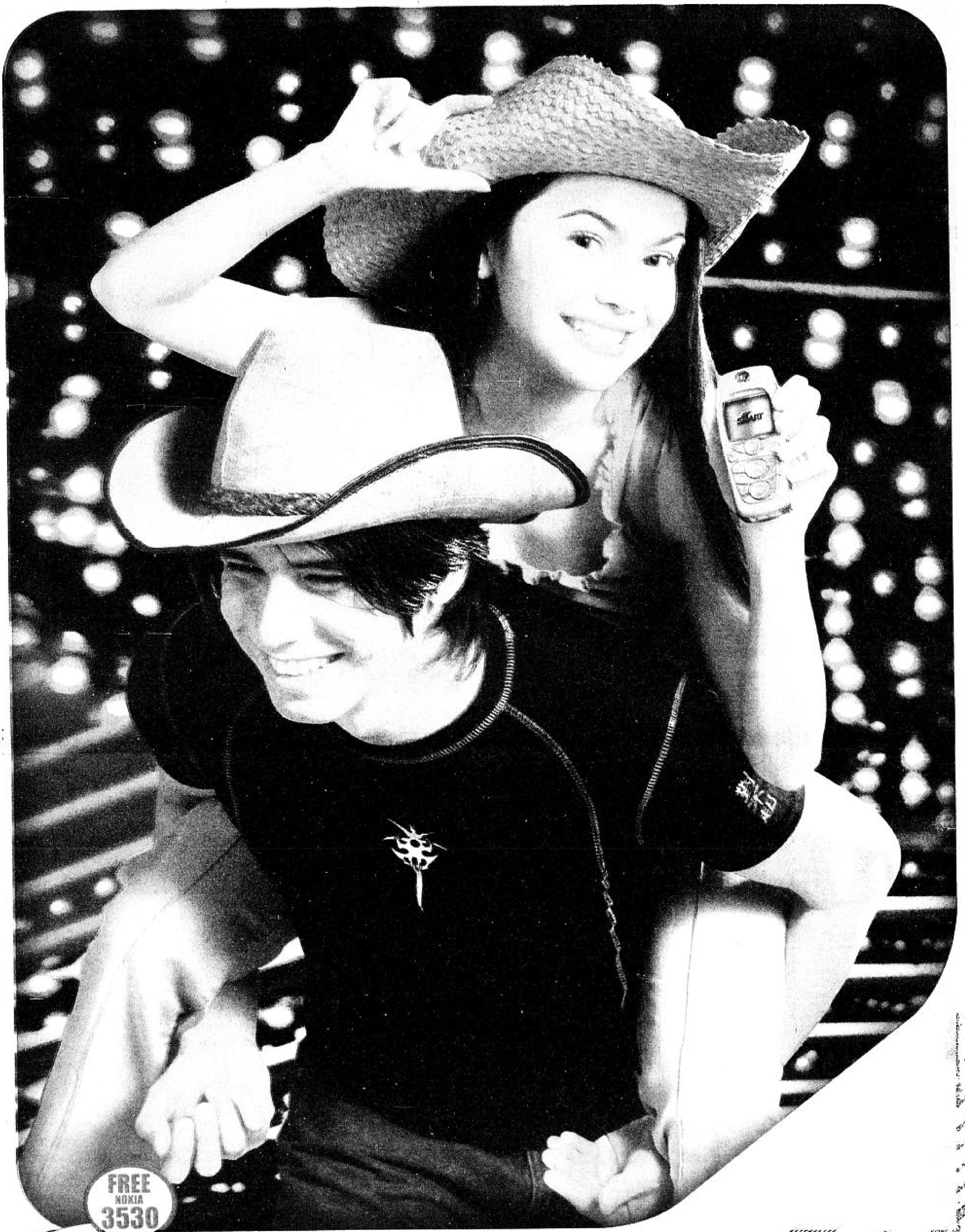

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Obey or be 'gassed'

By Christian V. Esguerra

BAYANI Fernando yesterday warned he would make good his threat of pouring kerosene over illegal vendors' goods to minimize their physical confrontations with his demolition team.

"I've been implementing (the drive) to the limit of my patience. But if they'd continue to resist, I might as well use gas once and for all," said the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair who concurrently serves as public works secretary.

"I know the public in general is already beginning to understand why we're doing all these things. I think now is the right time to use gas," he added.

Fernando was supposed to have gassed sidewalk merchandise as early as last year but shelved the move following a series of protest actions from illegal vendors backed by militant groups.

Fernando instead formed a "fully armed" demolition team, backed by a massive truck containing demolition tools, to clear the streets of all obstructions, particularly of ambulant vendors.

Had he pushed through with his original threat, Fernando said it could have prevented the violent clearing operation in Pasay last Friday.

In the operation, seven MMDA men allegedly beat up with wooden clubs an 18-year-old newspaper boy and a Chowking security guard.

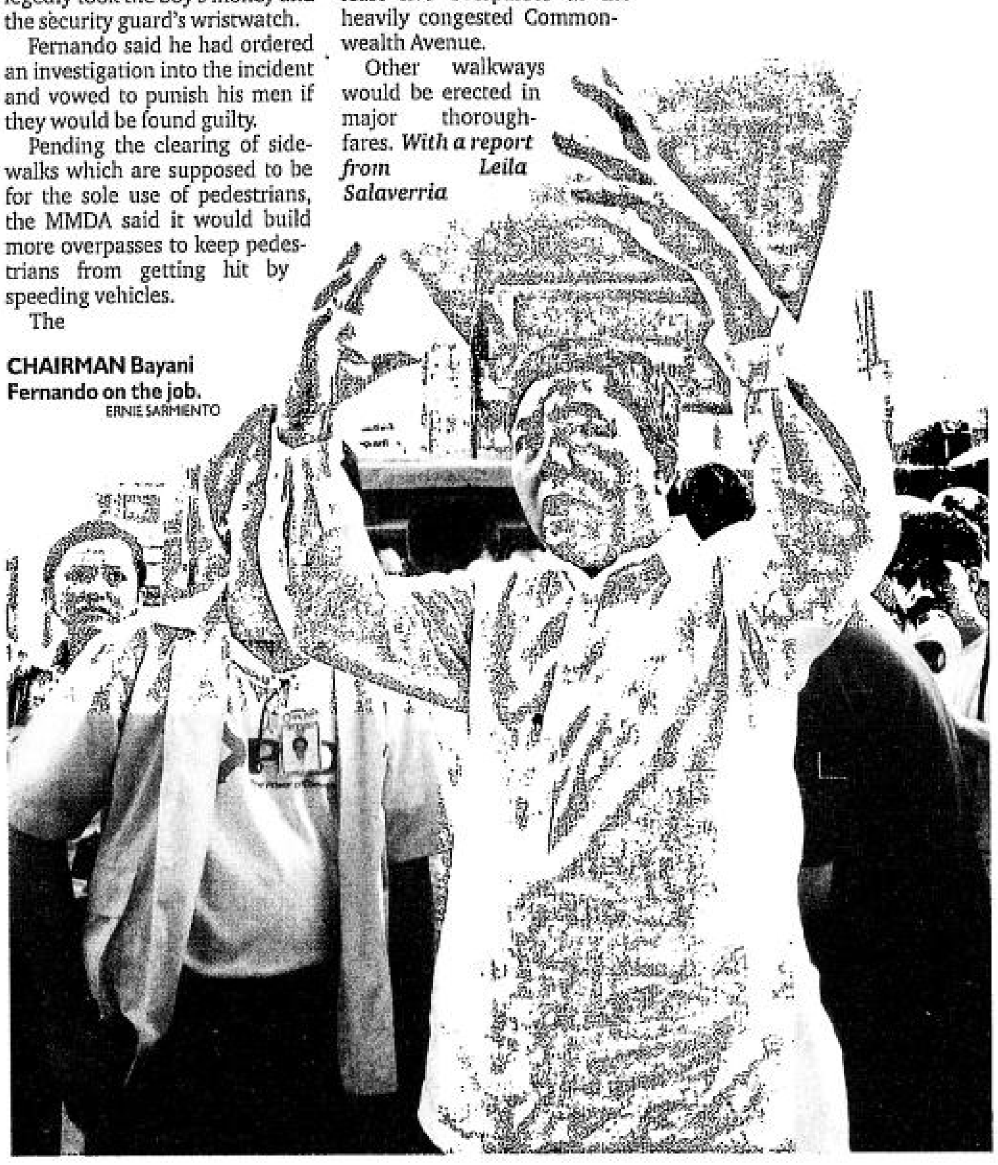
Besides clubbing the hapless victims, the MMDA men even allegedly took the boy's money and the security guard's wristwatch.

Fernando said he had ordered an investigation into the incident and vowed to punish his men if they would be found guilty.

Pending the clearing of sidewalks which are supposed to be for the sole use of pedestrians, the MMDA said it would build more overpasses to keep pedestrians from getting hit by speeding vehicles.

The MMDA would initially build at least five overpasses at the heavily congested Commonwealth Avenue.

Other walkways would be erected in major thoroughfares. *With a report from Leila Salaverria*



CHAIRMAN Bayani Fernando on the job.
ERNIE SARMIENTO

Do police officers read newspapers?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

EITHER our top police officials have gotten tired of reading newspapers. Or they simply don't give a damn if poor workers get killed by reckless vehicles while crossing our clogged, cruel city streets.

We are not losing hope. Not yet, anyway.

So for the third time, we are sounding this distress call.

Will police authorities do something about the case of Roberto Reyes Yumang, a poor family

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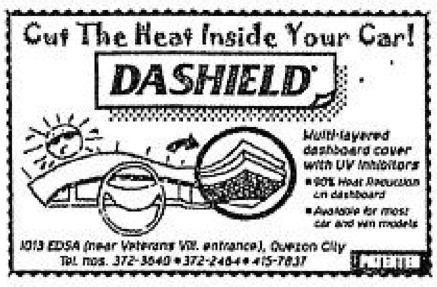
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A man with big connections, lawyer says of Llamas suspect

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE primary suspect in the killing of topnotch Ateneo law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas could have enjoyed close ties with either some policemen or a local official in Pasay.

This was the view of Vicente Verdadero, one of the counsels of the Llamas family who yesterday asked investigators to look into reports that suspect Bashir Abdulrahman used to lend money to policemen.

The lawyer said he had received another report that Abdulrahman was collecting grease money for a city official holding a sensitive and lucrative position.

"These reports are very serious," Verdadero said in a phone interview. "If any of them were true, the killer then is no ordinary criminal. He probably had connections."

The lawyer said any of the reports could probably explain why a bystander had referred to the killer as a policeman while the gunman was fleeing after he shot dead Llamas near the corner of Buendia and Taft Avenues in Pasay.

A witness who had trailed the gunman had quoted the bystander as telling a tricycle driver: "Pulis 'yan. Isakay n'yo 'yan (He's a policeman. Give him a ride)."

"It was possible that the killer was known in Pasay as a policeman," Verdadero said.

Police and the National Bureau of Investigation are set to file tomorrow murder charges against Abdulrahman after today's case conference at the NBI headquarters in Manila, the lawyer added.

THIS is Bashir Abdulrahman, primary suspect in the killing of Ateneo law graduate Jose Ramon Llamas.

Immigrations bureau asked to act on aliens

By Jerome Aning

A MANILA councilor has expressed alarm over the growing number of illegal aliens in the city who are engaged in assorted trade.

Another matter of great concern is the proliferation of motorbike-riding Indian nationals who are openly offering loans to Filipino vendors in suburban barangays at usurious rates.

Councilor Ma. Theresa Bonoan-David, in a proposed resolution, called on the Bureau of Immigration and the Philippine National Police to round up the aliens.

David said she personally observed aliens vending in Manila's commercial districts who do not know how to speak English or Tagalog but are into retail business.

She said the foreign retailers are competing with their Filipino counterparts, to the latter's disadvantage.

"The Constitution provides that the State shall develop a self-reliant and independent national economy effectively controlled by Filipinos," David said.

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Look who's helping in national computer literacy

By Leila B. Salaverria

MARY Jane Vitug, a fourth year student at the Baesa High School in Caloocan, remembers a time not long ago when she did not even know how to insert a diskette in the CPU of the computer.

But she has put this far behind her, as she now confidently uses a personal computer in her school to compose articles for the school paper and do the assignments for her other subjects.

Mary Jane's school is one of the beneficiaries of the Department of Trade and Industry's PCs for Public Schools Project, a program of secretary Mar Roxas which aims to upgrade the standard on information technology knowledge of the country's students, especially those in public schools.

The project is especially significant in this information-driven age where technological knowhow is almost always not just a preference, but a requirement.

Main target

The project targets public schools all over the country not covered by the Education and Science and Technology Departments' computer donations.

At last count, the DTI has provided almost a thousand schools with 20 state-of-the-art Compaq computers with printers and Microsoft programs, and sees to it that the PCs are well-maintained and the teachers well-trained.

According to DTI Director Dita Maralit, the younger the children learn about computers, the better for them so that they would be properly acquainted with technology.

Maralit said that one of the many benefits of being computer literate is that it is easier to find jobs whether you graduate from college or not.

"(Computer literacy) gives you options and an edge. Even non-computer related jobs like being a secretary or being an accountant require you to use computers," she explained.

Urgent need

The need for computer education is imminent, said officials of the DTI. They noted that there are some areas in the country where the students have not even seen, much less handled, a computer.

Roselle Rasay, one of those who oversee the project, said that in some areas, the teachers merely draw a computer on the blackboard for them to be able to point out its different parts to the student. However, this method rarely ensures that students actually learn to use the real thing.

But the DTI does not stop at merely donating PCs. Maralit said there are some areas where teachers themselves are afraid to touch the PCs, so that the units are left gathering dust and the students don't learn.

To ensure that the PCs are put to good use, the DTI trains one of the beneficiary schools' teachers, who in turn train their colleagues. The training is sponsored by microprocessor maker Intel Corp.

Parents, too

The DTI also requires that the selected schools have electricity and provide a computer room. Maralit said they aim to involve not just the students in the project, but their parents, the local government and the community as well by requiring the latter to do their share in providing for the upkeep of the computers.

Rasay said that, when the local community and the parents are involved in the project, a higher success rate is guaranteed.

For example, the local government in Caloocan provided for the computers' electricity in Baesa High School, while the Parent-Teacher-Community Association maintains the computer room's security and supplies.

Baesa High School's PTCA president Sarah Garduque said that the group's members buy the papers and supplies for the PCs and employ additional security guards and janitors and give them added benefits so that they would take care of the PCs. They have also spoken with barangay *tanods* to ensure that no one breaks into the school.

TRADE and Industry Secretary Mar Roxas appears most pleased during the awarding of one computer lab package to Lawang Bato National High School in Valenzuela City.

Garduque said they are doing all these because everyone in the school and the community are excited about the project. A teacher has even been teaching a computer class for free.

"Out of all the public schools, we are among those who have PCs," she said.

The benefits that the PCs bring to the students are easily felt and manifested. Mary Jane's classmates Ronald Manalili, Cristina Parsram, Rowena Baetiong and Josephus Canabuan all say that their computer class has taught them a lot.

Being involved in the school paper, the five classmates now find it easier to write and edit their works and to send their drafts to the printers.

"The articles are now computerized. At least the printers won't have trouble reading our handwriting," said Josephus.

Rowena added that using the PC is not as time-consuming as writing by hand.

Ronald said he has been able to use his newfound knowledge in the powerpoint program for school reports.

Cristina said she has been able to persuade her mom to buy her a computer after exhibiting her newfound knowledge.

While the classmates, with the exception of Ronald, are not intent on pursuing computer-related courses, they understand that their knowledge in computers will help them greatly in their future career paths.

Depot deal called a 'moro-moro'

By Jerome Aning

A MANILA opposition alderman and a cause-oriented group pushing for the phaseout of the Pandacan oil depot branded as "moro-moro (play acting)" the City Council's extension of the facility's stay in the area.

They said the depot will remain a target of Al Qaeda and other Muslim terrorists, especially since the country has openly expressed support for the United States in its confrontation with Iraq.

Minority councilor Benjamin Asilo, who boycotted the body's deliberation of the extension resolution last week, said the approval of the measure was "a done deal."

"Now that the depot has been retained, it will continue being a potential target of terrorists," Asilo said in a phone interview.

He added that he "believes it is not impossible that the majority councilors have a hidden agenda.".

"All we saw in the Council on Thursday was just a show and many councilors deceived the residents by pretending to be against the extension," Vladimir Cabigao, convenor of the United Front to Oust the Oil Depot, told the INQUIRER.

But minority floorleader Don Ramon Bagatsing called on his colleagues to stand behind the mayor in resolving the dispute.

"Now is the time to unite against such formidable institutions," he said, referring to the oil firms.

ATIENZA: Under suspicion

Bagatsing said that despite the new extension, the Council should stick to its original plan to have the depot relocated.

Asilo pointed out that his colleagues in the majority insisted on giving a six-month deadline for Caltex, Petron and Shell to move out of the depot.

The 1st district alderman recalled that experts have told the Council that realistically speaking, the depot cannot be moved out of Pandacan in less than five years.

The fact that the Council preserved the original phaseout ordinance was already "suspicious," Asilo added.

In 1992, when the Council was trying to evict the depot, Malacañang called councilors, told them to back off from their plan and promised a P400-million package for the development of Pandacan.

Asilo also pointed out that the Council merely extended the effectivity of the memorandum of understanding.

The phaseout ordinance, meanwhile, was "weakened" because the Council will be forming itself into a committee on the whole to "reassess" it.

The MOU modified the provisions of the ordinance by allowing the oil firms to remain. They are, however, required to reduce their operations by 40 percent.

Asilo said the Council should learn to make up its mind in dealing with the oil firms.

In August last year, Asilo sued Atienza before the Office of the Ombudsman for entering into the MOU with the companies.

In December, Cabigao and the lawyers group Social Justice Society asked the Supreme Court to nullify the MOU and force Atienza to implement the ordinance.

Asilo and Cabigao both maintain that the MOU is illegal, saying it cannot supersede the ordinance.

They said their respective cases have been strengthened because Atienza again defied the law by endorsing a second extension.

Another cop in robbery

AFTER the arrest on Friday of a "hulidap" policeman, Manila lawmen nabbed yesterday a rookie cop who, together with two other men, robbed a student in Ermita, Manila.

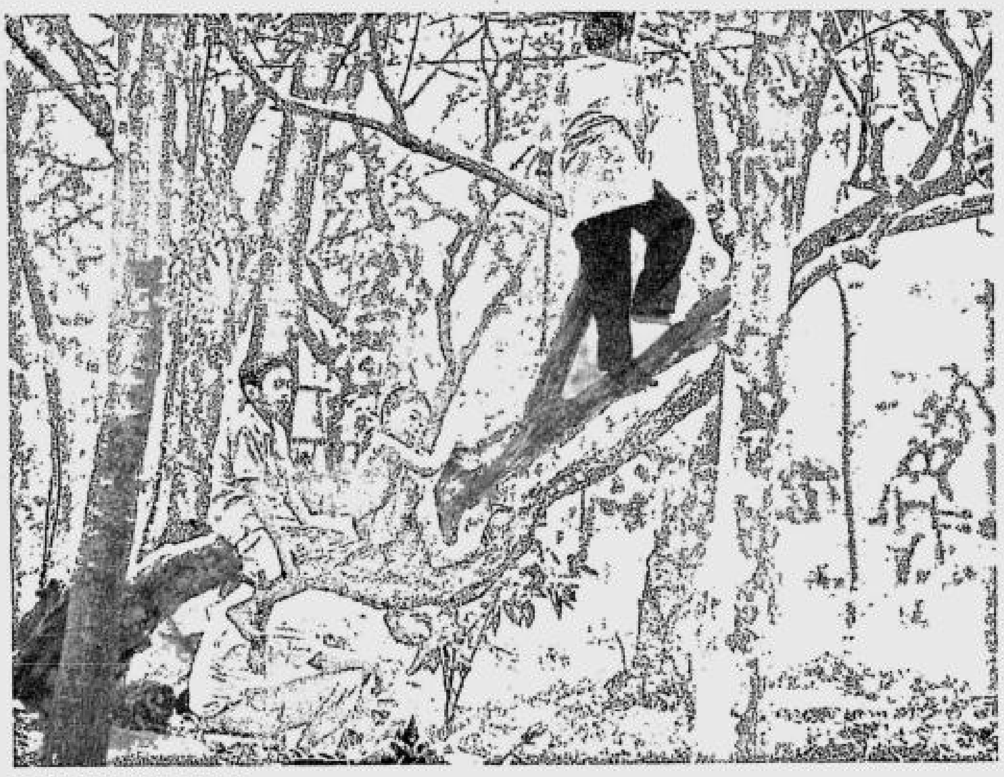
The erring policeman even used the gun of his brother, who turned out to be another lawman assigned to the Tondo police station.

The culprit was identified as P02 Edwin R. Roma, 25, of the PNP-Special Action Unit in Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig, and of 950 Masinop St. Tondo, Manila, said SP02 Loreto Concepcion, of the Western Police District-District Police Intelligence Unit.

The suspect's two other accomplices, Danilo M. Cunanan, 25, of 310 Matimtiman St., Tondo, and Francisco Riña, a truck driver, of 331 Ibarra St., Tondo, were also arrested, Concepcion said.

They allegedly robbed student Edhemeir S. Usman, 24, a native of Sulu, and of B-34, L-4 Maharlika Village, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Philip C. Tubeza



WISDOM OF TREES

Only God can make a tree and lucky are members of this family who find time to enjoy God's wisdom as they spend a sunny, carefree World Wet Day yesterday among trees at the Parks and Wildlife Center in Quezon City.

VAL HANDUMON

Do police officers ...

From page A25

driver from Mandaluyong who was hit and killed by two vehicles that were trying to outrace each other in Sta. Mesa (near Discovery) in the early evening of Jan. 19.

***

For the record, the INQUIRER has published the plate numbers those two vehicles that had run over the victim based on eyewitness testimonies.

The case had also been logged in the police blotter.

After burning the lines, our reporter, Christian Esguerra, has succeeded in tracing ownership of one of the killer vehicles.

The has been traced to a business establishment in Binondo, Manila.

Based on the 1991 records of the Land Transportation Office in Cebu, license plate number GDL 116 belongs to an Isuzu cargo truck registered under Hesscon Merchandising , said LTO officer Melva Vasquez.

The other killer vehicle, a Starex van, could not be immediately traced because its license plate number (MJJ 811) was not in the LTO's official series of vehicle registrations.

An LTO officer said Thursday that the Starex could have been using a fake plate when it hit Yumang while the victim was crossing a pedestrian lane on Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard.

***

Witnesses said one of the vehicles in the accident even sounded a siren.

The van was trying to outrace the other vehicle when the accident happened.

Of course, we understand why the police officer who was supposed to take charge of the case did not do anything.

.The victim was a small fry.

But we are not losing hope.

The reason we've posted the story in a more prominent portion or our Metro section.

The leads may not be very clear.

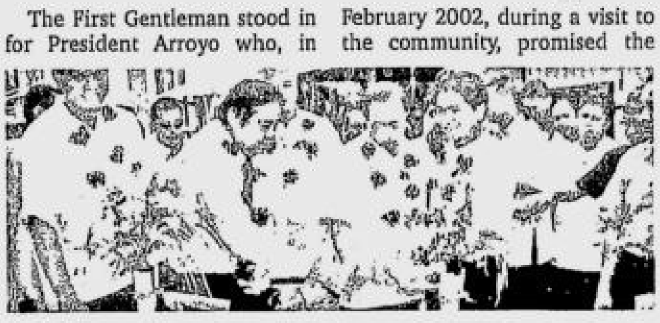
But here's hoping authorities would at least read and take notice. We can assure the effort won't tax their dreary brain.

Poor residents realize dream of potable water

RESIDENTS of an urban poor community located just a stone's throw from the NAIA runway finally realized their long-standing wish to have their own potable and affordable water when First Gentleman Mike Arroyo inaugurated last month Maynilad Water Services, Inc.'s Bayan Tubig project at Brgy.Sto. Niño, Parañaque City.

The Sto Niño Bayan Tubig project is the second to be opened by Maynilad in January. The first was at M. Hizon St., 10th Ave. Caloocan City which Caloocan Mayor Rey Malonzo inaugurated on Jan. 21.

The First Gentleman stood in for President Arroyo who, in February 2002, during a visit to the community, promised the residents of the area that they would soon have their own water service connections. She immediately directed Maynilad and MWSS to work on the project.



MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. inaugurates its Bayan Tubig project at Barangay Sto. Niño, Parañaque City. In photo are (from left) Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo, Maynilad President Rafael Alunan III, Cong. Eduardo Zialcita, and Vice Mayor Florencio Bernabe.

The First Gentleman lauded the putting up of the Bayan Tubig project, noting that with the public faucets, the residents' water bills have gone down. Where before they used to pay P3.50 per 20-liter container, or P525 a month at five 20-liter containers a day, the residents now pay only P2.00 per container, or P300, for the same volume of water.

One dead as fiesta turns bloody

By Philip C. Tubeza

FEASTING during a barrio fiesta was marred when a drinking bout in Tondo, Manila turned into a brawl on Saturday night.

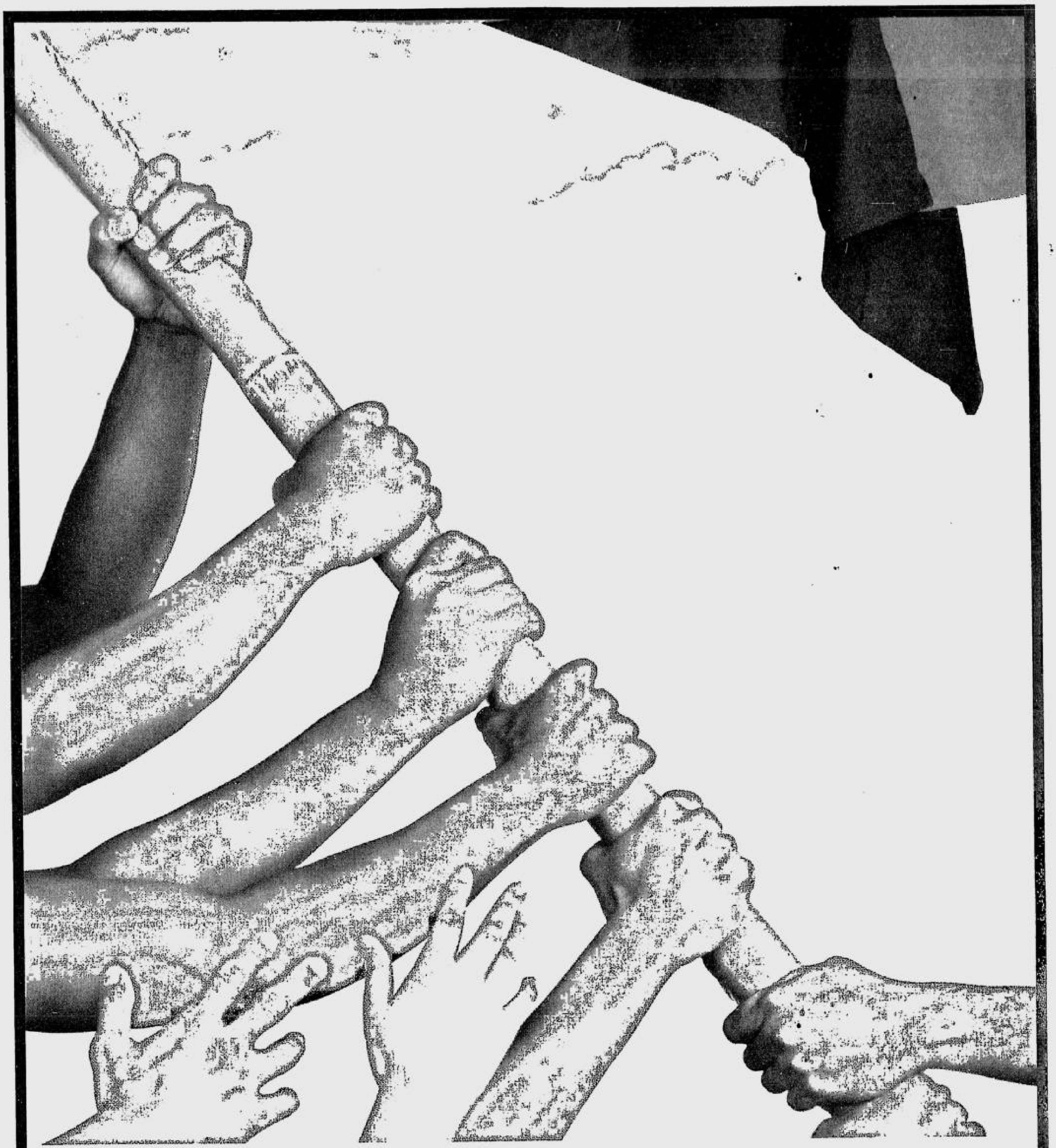
Sonny R. Reyes, 38, of 757 Ricafort St., Tondo, Manila, was stabbed dead during the melee, said Detective Diomedes Labarda, of the Western Police District-homicide section.

He had a single stab wound in his upper left chest and a slash on his right finger, Labarda said.

Another merrymaker, Jerry M. Iringo, was also stabbed and injured.

Labarda said the stabbing incident happened at around 11:25 p.m. on Saturday at Road 10 corner Chesa St. Rawis, Tondo, Manila.

Reyes and his fellow employees of Sta. Monica Trucking were having a drinking spree on the eve of their barrio fiesta when the incident happened.



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9	8 MILE
10	HOT CHICK

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	SUKDULAN
2	HALF PAST DEAD
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
5	8 MILE
6	FEMME FATALE
7	BELOW
8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
9	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
10	DIE ANOTHER DAY
11	HOT CHICK
12	SUKDULAN

SM CITY MANILA
5238240

1	HOT CHICK
2	RING (JAPANESE)
3	TRY SEVENTEEN
4	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
5	BELOW
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
8	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
9	SUKDULAN
10	MAGNIFICO
11	FEMME FATALE
12	8 MILE

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	BELOW
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
5	RING (JAPANESE)
6	8 MILE
7	TRY SEVENTEEN
8	SUKDULAN
9	MAGNIFICO
10	HOT CHICK
11	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
12	FEMME FATALE

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9205452

1	MAGNIFICO
2	8 MILE
3	HOT CHICK
4	SUKDULAN
5	RING (JAPANESE)
6	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
7	BELOW
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888

1	8 MILE
2	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
3	BELOW
4	MAGNIFICO
5	LONG TIME DEAD
6	TRY SEVENTEEN
7	SUKDULAN
8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
9	HOT CHICK
10	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
3	ANALYZE THAT
4	SWIMFAN
5	8 MILE
6	SUKDULAN
7	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
8	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	CHARLOTTE GRAY
2	CLOSED
3	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
4	HALF PAST DEAD
5	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
6	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
7	CLOSED
8	SUKDULAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	ONE HOUR PHOTO
3	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)
5	BELOW
6	SUKDULAN

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294976

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	BELOW
3	SUKDULAN
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	BELOW
3	FEMME FATALE
4	SUKDULAN

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	HALF PAST DEAD
2	SUKDULAN
3	MY BIG FAT GREEK WEDDING
4	HOT CHICK
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	BELOW

SM BICUTAN
776-3065

1	BELOW
2	SUKDULAN
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	THE RING (HOLLYWOOD)

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884

1	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS
2	SUKDULAN
3	ANALYZE THAT
4	LOTR: THE TWO TOWERS

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2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN 10:40 FS/11:10 MF/1:55/4:40/7:25/ 9:45 LFS/10:10 LMF/12:30 END

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4	FEMME FETALE
5	SUKDULAN
6	LORD OF THE RINGS II
7	8 MILE
8	THE RING (US VERSION)
9	RING (JAPANESE VERSION)
10	HOT CHICK

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3	BELOW
4	RING (JAPANESE VERSION)
5	8 MILE
6	HOT CHICK
7	SUKDULAN

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1	THE RING (US VERSION)
2	LORD OF THE RINGS II
3	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
4	BELOW
5	HOT CHICK
6	FEMME FETALE
7	8 MILE
8	SUKDULAN

Novaliches
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1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	THE RING (US VERSION)
3	HOT CHICK
4	SUKDULAN
5	FEMME FETALE
6	8 MILE
7	BELOW
8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

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4	FEMME FATALE

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2	SUKDULAN
3	ANALYZE THAT
4	BELOW
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	HOT CHICK

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1	FEMME FETALE
2	8 MILE
3	BELOW
4	THE RING (US VERSION)
5	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
6	SUKDULAN

Sta. Rosa Laguna
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1	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
2	BELOW
3	SUKDULAN
4	THE RING (US VERSION)
5	ONE HOUR PHOTO

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1	LORD OF THE RINGS II
2	BELOW
3	LORD OF THE RINGS II
4	HALF PAST DEAD
5	THE RING (US VERSION)
6	8 MILE

Iloilo
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1	LORD OF THE RING II
2	HALF PAST DEAD
3	SUKDULAN
4	LORD OF THE RING II
5	CHARLOTTE GRAY
6	THE RING (US VERSION)

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Carlo Maceda dreams of going international

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

THERE'S more to **Carlo Maceda**—he with the rippling muscles, well-chiseled physique, boyish demeanor and tons of sex appeal—than meets the eye.

While his good looks and gorgeous body are requisite qualities for most show biz heartthrobs, Carlo readily proves he has something between his ears when he opens his mouth. He easily stands out from the current crop of sexy studs who are all brawn but no brains.

Carlo is a talker who pumps sense into your head when you come face to face with him. He can babble anything about his career, family life and ambition.

Living only with his 19-year-old younger brother **Mike**, Carlo is the fourth in a brood of five children. His dad is based in Toronto, Canada, while his mom is in California.

The show biz neophyte dreams big. He wants to go places and expresses his desire to be part of a Hollywood film.

"I don't really know where I'm heading to and I'm still finding my way in the business," Carlo asserts. "But wouldn't it be fun to see a Filipino actor starring with **Hugh Grant**? That's a long shot, I know, but times are changing. **Jet Li** has gone international. So why not a Filipino actor?"

Carlo got an acting break after he auditioned for the role of a Chinese-looking guy who could also speak the language, to be cast in **Joel Lamangan's** Metro Manila Film Festival entry, "Mano Po."

In the interview with Regal Films matriarch **Lily Monteverde** and her daughter **Roselle Teo**, Carlo said he was talking in Chinese with them.

For the role of an autistic nerd, Carlo reveals he had to get inspiration from **Edward Norton** in "Primal Fear" and "The Score," and even from **Dennis Roldan** in "Bakit Bughaw ang Kulay ng Langit."

"Playing a nerd wasn't hard for me," Carlo admits. "Nobody remembers me as a hunk in college. In a lot of ways, I was a nerd then."

The double degree holder—mathematics and business administration—from the University of the Philippines wanted to get into business after college. So Carlo put up a a computer store, pet shop, pop corn corners and a restaurant, Gardo's, which serves Filipino food along Sgt. Esguerra in Quezon City, fronting the ABS-CBN lobby.

Admittedly, Carlo never imagined himself joining show biz or being an actor. The closest that he got to being in the limelight was working as a ramp model for occasional fashion stints.

But after his friends dared him to join the Mossimo Bikini Summit last year and he decided to go for it, Carlo's life drastically took a different turn when he won the contest.

"It was a 180-degree turn from my old lifestyle of simply sitting down in the house and tinkering with my computer," Carlo allows. "Now, I'm always out, meeting a lot of people."

His buddies, who include Power Boys member **Geoff Rodriguez** and Close-Up model **Brad Turvey**, prodded him to join the Mossimo Bikini Summit in Boracay in April last year.

"From the airport we saw this poster about the contest and they convinced me to join," Carlo shares.

Since he was at it, Carlo was forced to suit up for the competition. For the beefcake poses, he had to go on a diet and ate only fish and potatoes. From a hefty 220 pounds, he trimmed down to 175. His display of brains and brawn during the finals night in Boracay did not escape the eyes of the judges, who singled him out to win.

Carlo happily notes his fellow batch members in the competition, including controversial Power Boy **Jordan Herrera**, have been going places.

"The contest has been a big stepping stone for us," Carlo says. "Everyone is moving up. There was a time when it was Jordan who was being hyped as the winner and I felt bad about it. I confronted the Mossimo people and Jordan, too. That was the reason my manager, **Arnold Vegafria**, decided we should come up with a publicity blitz."

Carlo's Mossimo Bikini Summit title came with an acting contract with Viva Films. He signed up for a three-year, eight-picture deal.

"I wanted to try the movies while I'm still young, so when I'm 40, I can say that I experienced being an actor," says Carlo.

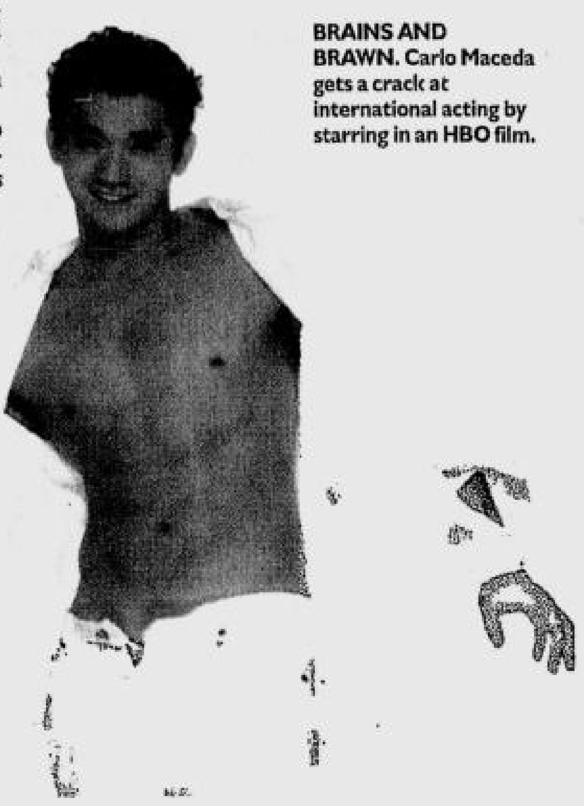
He attests he is now having fun with his chosen career.

"But it doesn't mean I have to change my personality. Live a little and since I'm at it, I might as well be good in what I'm doing."

Carlo's second film outing pictured him in a daring role. He clinched the part of a suave, but ruthless sex maniac in **Mac Alejandre's** "Sukdulan," starring screen nymphet **Katya Santos**.

The film is a gripping tale of lust and passion and saw Carlo baring his butt on-

CARLO/ A30



BRAINS AND BRAWN. Carlo Maceda gets a crack at international acting by starring in an HBO film.

VISIBLE ARTIST. Comedienne Rufa Mae Quinto doesn't mind being busy.

RUFA MAE QUINTO

She works hard for the money

By Marinel R. Cruz

CONTRARY to other people's initial perception of her, there is more to actress Rufa Mae Quinto than her scatterbrained-sexpot image.

She has wit, charm and a strong sense of responsibility.

Through hard work and determination, Rufa Mae has managed to buy herself a house, a van and more recently, a top-of-the-line Jaguar coupe after only less than 10 years in the business.

Upon realizing that show biz is not forever, the sexy star was also able to invest her hard-earned money on a beauty parlor she called "Booba's Secrets" (in BF Homes Parañaque) and a boutique and money-exchange shop she named "Anik Anik."

"I work hard to be able to provide a secured life for my family," says the popular comedienne. "But I also want to enjoy my life."

Rufa Mae attests she enjoys being in show biz despite controversies linking him to actors Rudy Fernandez, Bong Revilla and Mikey Arroyo, whom she recently worked with in the upcoming comedy flick, "A.B. Normal Col

SHE/ A31

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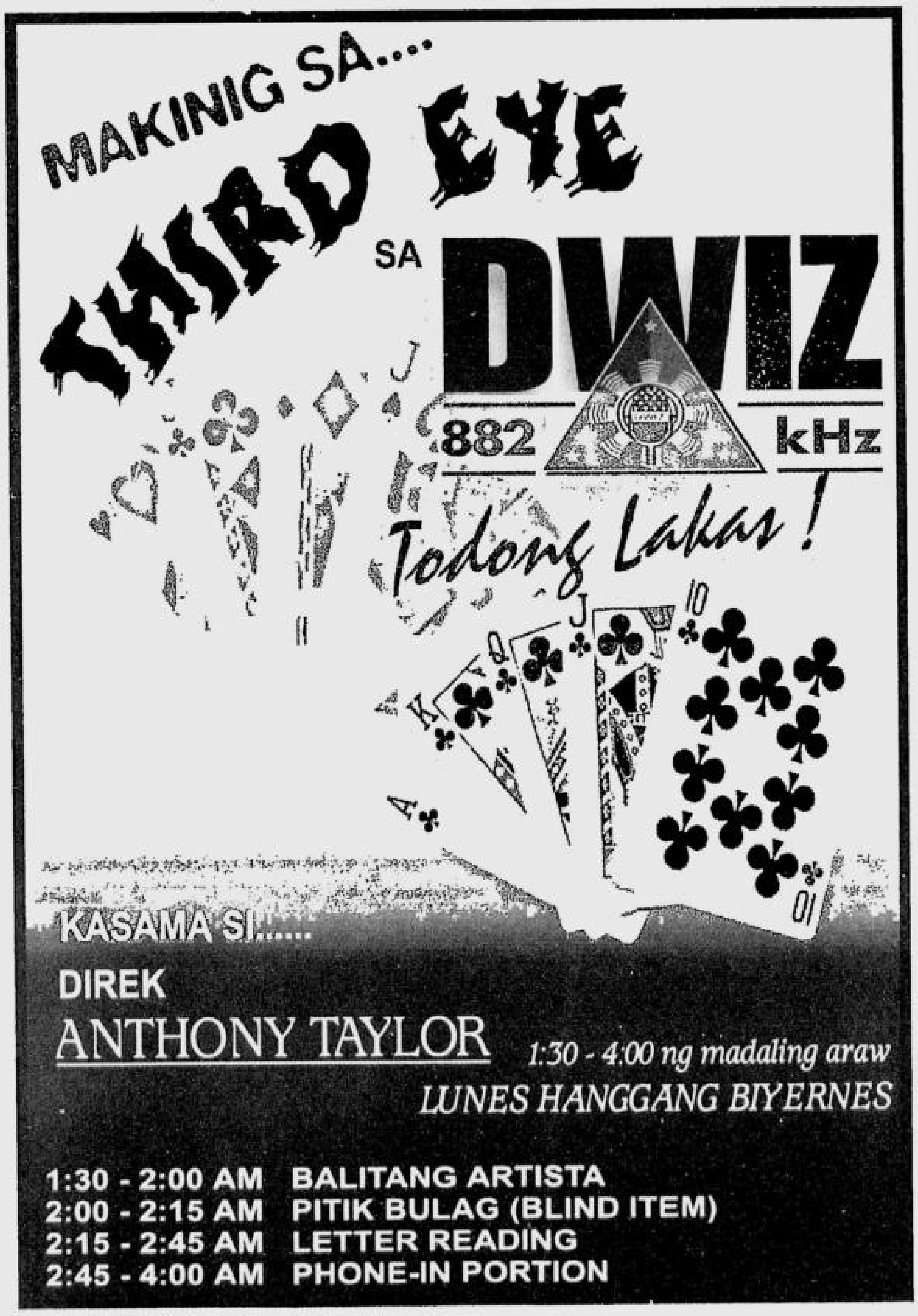

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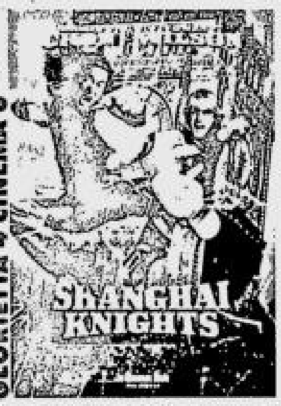

10 FEB
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Carlo Maceda dreams of going international

From page A29

screen. He also did titillating publicity stills apparently to gain a bigger shot at stardom.

Yet, despite his bold turn, Carlo insists he doesn't want to be typecast as a sexy actor even if he has the body to die for.

"I want to explore my acting ability," Carlo says. "I'm looking forward to doing a thriller and a comedy.

"If you're smart, I believe it will exude. If you're sexy, it will also exude. It's in your bearing. I don't think my greatest asset is my body. I believe it's my personality."

Carlo gets a crack at international acting in HBO's made-for-TV movie about the Abu Sayaff, "When Eagle Strikes," to be shot in Subic starting today. He clinched the role of a greenhorn Amerasian marine, which required him to give up his curly locks and sport a crewcut.

His coactors include veteran Hollywood star **Jack Palance**, as well as local stars **Eddie Garcia** and taekwondo expert **Monsour del Rosario**.

"I get to fire an M-16 and ride boats for this movie," Carlo excitedly shares.

Despite his celebrity status, Carlo's pleasures and lifestyle have remained simple. He still washes his car and even his clothes.

He has also kept his values intact. He kisses the hand of his aunt even in a busy restaurant and bar like Dish at Rockwell's Power Plant Mall.

He regularly goes to church and attends Bible studies.

Does his fellow church members frown on his sexy image?

"If I'm causing anyone to sin with what I do onscreen, then that's a problem for me," Carlo says. "But I'm an actor and it was just a role given to me. It's okay if they think of me as a sex symbol, but if they include lust, that's different."

The guy, whose bedtime companions include the novels of **Mario Puzo, Sidney Sheldon, Tom Clancy** and **John Grisham,** says he is indeed ready for the business. Not even the intrigues, negative writeups and criticism from his detractors can derail him at this point in his career.

"Even if others question my sexuality, I don't let it affect me," Carlo says. "That only means I've made my mark."

Faulty thriller that lacks originality

From page A32

going in their home and being part of what he sees as the perfect family.

The questions that come to mind when one sees this film include: Why the obsession? Why does he keep the photographs of the Yorkin family? Why the Yorkins, out of all the families in the neighborhood? Is he a serial killer? Is he a child molester?

The film begins with Parrish being photographed for his mug shot. The entire film is told in flashback as Parrish narrates what exactly happened to a police detective (Eriq LaSalle). Then the film proceeds to answer all the questions that are in the audiences' mind. It does so with good potential and manages to hook all of us for the first hour.

Stereotypical

Unfortunately, the third act of the film where Parrish discovers that Will is having an adulterous affair with another woman, thereby destroying the vision of the "perfect family" Parrish admires, falls apart and everything else becomes cliché and stereotypical.

Parrish's tearful confession about why he did what he did is so tired and forced that it could have come out of any melodramatic soap opera.

Romanek already had a potentially very interesting, original concept, but he had to ruin it all by going about it the easy way and resorting to an easy, less complex resolution.

What gives this film much of its life is, without a doubt, Robin Williams's exceptional performance. He has been getting a lot of negative criticism for starring in one sappy comic drama after another (like "Jakob the Liar" or "Patch Adams"), following his Oscar-winning turn as best supporting actor in the drama "Good Will Hunting."

Tearjerker

As if responding to all those criticism, Williams took a break from his cuddly comic tearjerkers and showed quite a bit of his dark side playing the murderer of a teenage girl in "Insomnia."

In "One Hour Photo," Williams shows the audience more proof of his versatility and that he is not only capable making us laugh and cry, but also capable of scaring and disturbing us as well.

Mission accomplished, I say.

Promising

I wish I could say the same for the rest of the film. Aside from Williams's performance and the promising first half, the film never really takes flight. It can be compared to watching a basketball team who keeps passing the ball to one player, the star player, while the rest take a backseat and no longer try their best.

The only other one who seems to be trying is Connie Nielsen, almost unrecognizable here from her last role in "Gladiator," but her character, like all the other characters not played by Robin Williams, is underwritten.

Faulty

Another one of Romanek's fatal mistakes is concentrating solely on Seymour Parrish and not giving any other characters much complexity as if they exist only to be the objects of fixation of Parrish.

The film would have been better and even more complex had there been more interesting characterizations.

The film really struggles and really wants to be a one-of-a-kind thriller but due to Romanek's lack of originality, the faulty third act and the lack of interesting supporting characters, it never really lives up to its full potential.

As the old saying goes: Nice try but no cigar.

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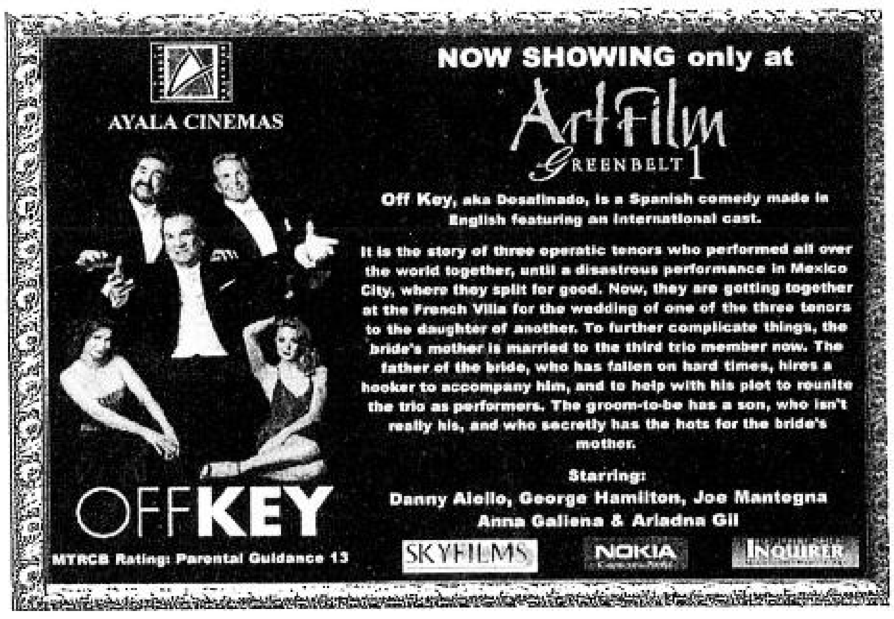
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Starring:
Danny Aiello, George Hamilton, Joe Mantegna
Anna Galiena & Ariadna Gil

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OPENS FEBRUARY 12
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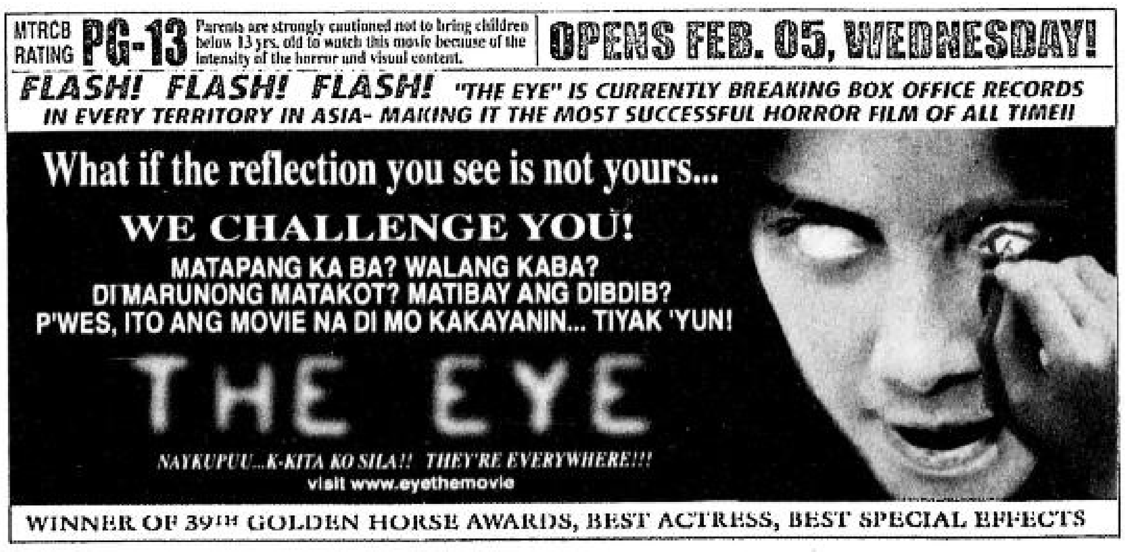
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Premiere Magazine - Glenn Kenny
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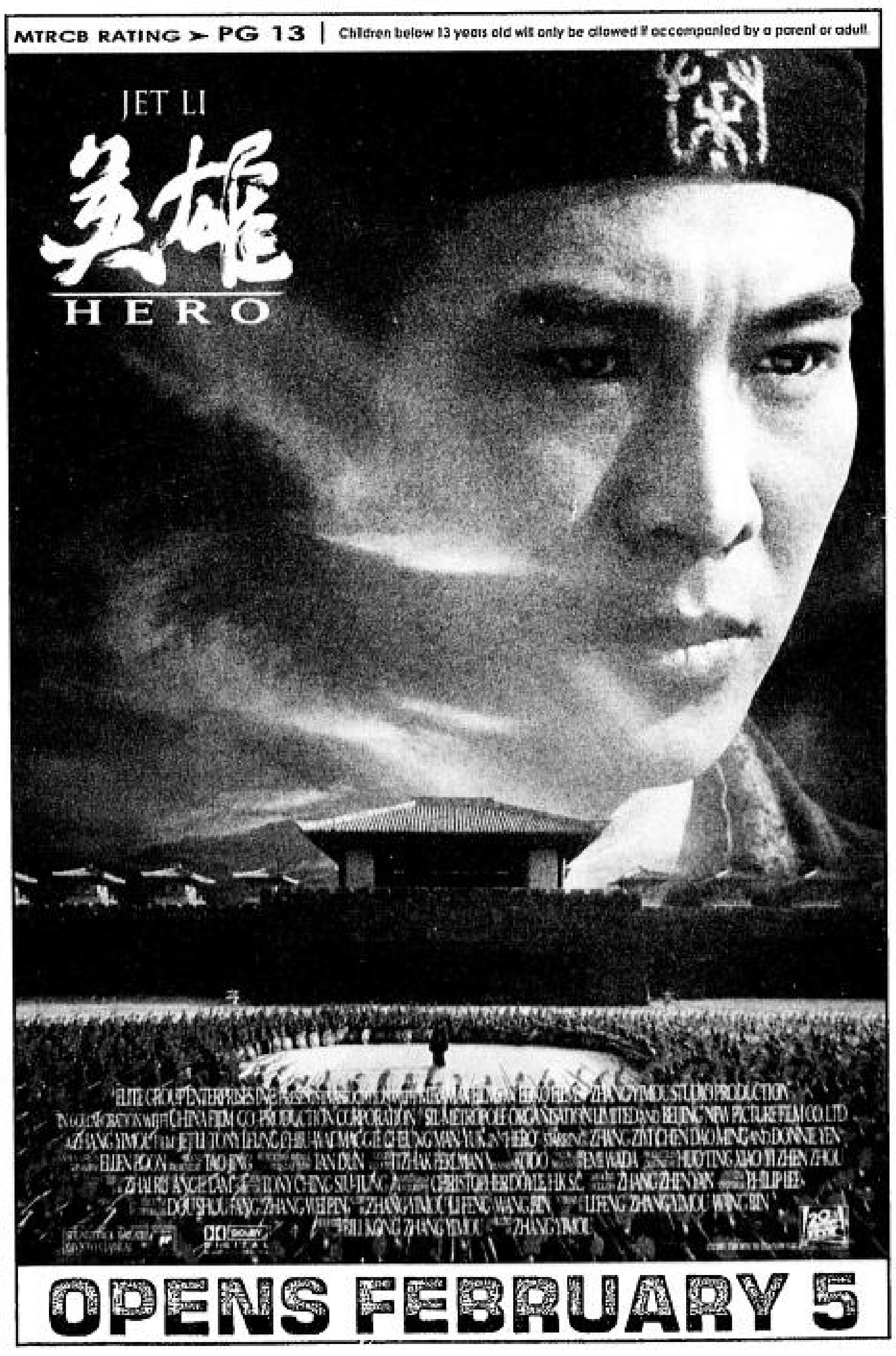
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OPENS FEBRUARY 5

Gritty honesty and vitality

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

"8 Mile" starts out like the latest variation on the "Karate Kid" or "Fame" format—a film about disadvantaged youths who have to compete against some nasty rivals, but triumph in the end.

Slowly but surely, however, the film asserts itself as an original effort—and achievement. In place of the usual gloss and simplistic problems to overcome, this film is gritty and as unglamorous as a bruise on a bloodied face.

It also has a sound that's raw and urgent. Its young protagonists are rappers who express their driving needs and wants in shouts, screams—and streetsmart poetry.

The film zeroes in on a near-anachronism—Rabbit, a white boy (**Eminem**) in a sea of black and brown ethnics who make up the denizens of the poorest and most dangerous section of Detroit.

He has more than his share of problems: Not only is he a Nobody in a Nowhere land with practically no prospects of escape, but he's saddled with a ditzy mom who has a violent lover.

Instead of switching off, however, Eminem's character listens intently to the pulse of his heart, the thoughts of his fevered brain, and the sad, mad stories of the people who live and die around him.

And, from this cacophony, welter and mess, he bursts out in explosions of angry, witty rap lyrics that touch a raw nerve and a struggling spirit in his listeners.

This unique gift of his is his ticket to freedom, away from the 8 Mile quagmire that sucks its denizens down to their unremembered deaths.

But escape doesn't come easily even for this rapper with the rapier wit. Before he can escape, his heart has to be broken by his ambitious love (**Brittany Murphy**), he has to save his mother from herself and his kid sister from all sorts of predators, and he has to pull his gangmates out of the rut they've dug themselves in.

Only after he has found himself by helping others does his rap become so sure and strong that he demolishes the nasty competition at the big rap contest that promises radio and recording success—and the much-longed-for escape.

So, even as the film achieves the regulation happy ending for stories like this, the effect is bracing instead of predictable.

Adding to the film's gritty honesty and vitality are the performances turned in by Eminem, Murphy and many of its non-acting actors.

Murphy has already strutted her sassy stuff in other movies, so the big revelation here is screen first-timer Eminem, who is savagely, soulfully compelling as the film's poet-protagonist.

Feedback

CONCLUDING part of **Teodoro M. Reynoso**'s letter: "We have watched the two competing giants (GMA and ABS) shows for years, so we know that the Lopez media outfit has done nothing offensive to provoke GMA to resort to underhanded tactics. What could affect GMA is the loss some years ago of its broadcast leadership to ABS.

"With its programming changes and improved broadcast reach, however, GMA has started to gain on ABS. Wooing the audience with better programs and modern technology is a good thing.

"But fomenting contempt of a rival network is something else. We have enough divisiveness in our society; media need not add to it. Please spare the audience, especially the youth. The media's role today must be geared towards healing and uniting . . ."

Jennifer Garner

GOLDEN Globe Best Actress winner (for "Alias" on TV) **Jennifer Garner** plays femme fatale and martial arts expert Elektra Natchios in **Ben Affleck**'s new starrer, "Daredevil." Elektra is the daughter of a powerful Greek tycoon, and the love interest of Matt Murdock (also played by Affleck).

The movies producers tested many actresses for the plum female-lead role in places like Los Angeles, New York, Europe and Australia.

Why did they choose Jennifer? "She looks sweet, but when you dress her up, she's sexy and exotic," says director **Mark Steven Johnson**. "She's a real chameleon—that was exactly what we were looking for in the actress who would play Elektra."

Tribute

GANTIMPALA Theater Foundation stages a twin bill of English plays by National Artists for Theater **Wilfrido Ma. Guererro** ("Wanted: A Chaperon") and **Severino Montano** ("Parting at Calamba") on Feb. 8 and 9 (10 a.m. and 2 p.m.) at the RFC Cinema Theater in Las Piñas City.

Other shows and venues: Feb. 21, 22 and 23 (10 a.m. and 2 p.m.) at the AFP theater, Camp Aguinaldo, QC; and on March 1 and 2 (10 a.m. and 2 p.m.) at St. Cecilia's Hall, Saint Scholastica's College. Call 899-5745.

She works hard . . .

From page A29

lege," for Viva Films.

Rufa Mae admits the rumors hardly affect her anymore. She has been so used to gossip that she no longer tries to find out who is making them up.

"Like what Katharine Hepburn used to say, I don't care about what they write about me, as long as it's not true. O 'di ba?," she says.

With three regular TV shows—"Ang Iibigin Ko'y Ikaw," "Bubble Gang" and "Idol Ko Si Kap"—plus occasional appearances on "Eat Bulaga" and "SOP," Rufa Mae has got to be GMA 7's most visible artist today.

She doesn't mind being busy, though.

"With today's economic crisis, I'm happy enough to be working," she points out. "Besides, in show biz, if you're not doing anything, that means you're not popular."

After the success of "Super B," where she played the sexy and kooky super hero Ate Bi, Rufa Mae will be seen anew on the big screen as the hilarious schoolteacher Eula Yulo in "A.B. Normal College."

The movie also features comedians Ogie Alcasid and Andrew E., with presidential son and Pampanga Vice Governor Mikey Arroyo.

Rufa Mae informs "A.B. Normal College" follows a comedy-love story format with her as Mikey's love interest.

Mikey's affection for Rufa Mae was said to have gone beyond their on-screen romance. In fact, the actor's rumored romantic involvement with Rufa Mae was reportedly making his wife Angela Montenegro, jealous and overprotective.

While Rufa Mae recently admitted to a group of writers during the movie's press conference that Mikey did court her, she pointed out that she and Mikey were never an item.

"A.B. Normal College" also stars Patricia Javier, Jenny Rosendahl, Rico J. Puno and the Salbakuta. Al Tantay directs the script written by Rolif Mahilom and Sherwin Buenavista.

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ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	SUKDULAN
Ali 2	LOD OF THE RINGS 2
Ali 3	CATCH ME IF U CAN
Ali 4	FEMME FATALE
Ali 5	HOT CHICK
Ali 6	TRY SEVENTEEN
Ali 7	BELOW
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	8 MILE
Farmers 2	THE RING
ARANETA COLISEUM	
FEB 3 & 5	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
FEB 8	LANI MISALUCHA CONCERT
FEB 15	ABBA TRIBUTE CONCERT
ELEPHANT WORLD	
FEB 2	3 PM / 5 PM
FEB 4	10 AM / 3 PM
FEB 5	10 AM / 3 PM

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	BIYAHERA / POSSESSION
ODEON	FEMME FATAL
ODEON-2	SAMBAHIN ANG PURI / TUKAAN
ROBEN	SUKDULAN
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	RED DRAGON / TRAP
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SUKDULAN
CORONET B	DERAITED / BUSS FOR PLEASURE
QUEZON-1	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
REMAR	SUKDULAN
REMAR-2	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	SUKDULAN
B	
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	UK FILM FESTIVAL
CINEMA-2	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	TRY SEVENTEEN
CINEMA-2	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO
CINEMA-3	8 MILE
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	LORD OF THE RINGS 2
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	ONE HOUR PHOTO
CINEMA-6	LASTIKMAN
CINEMA-7	BANGKERO
CINEMA-8	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	BELOW
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	FEMME FATALLE
CINEMA-12	SUKDULAN
CINEMA-14	HOT CHICK
CINEMA-15	THE RING
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	CHANGING LANES
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
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HOT CHICK P13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	BELOW P13 12:00, 2:15, 4:30, 6:45, 9:00	CATCH ME IF YOU CAN P13 11:10,2:00,4:50, 7:40,10:30

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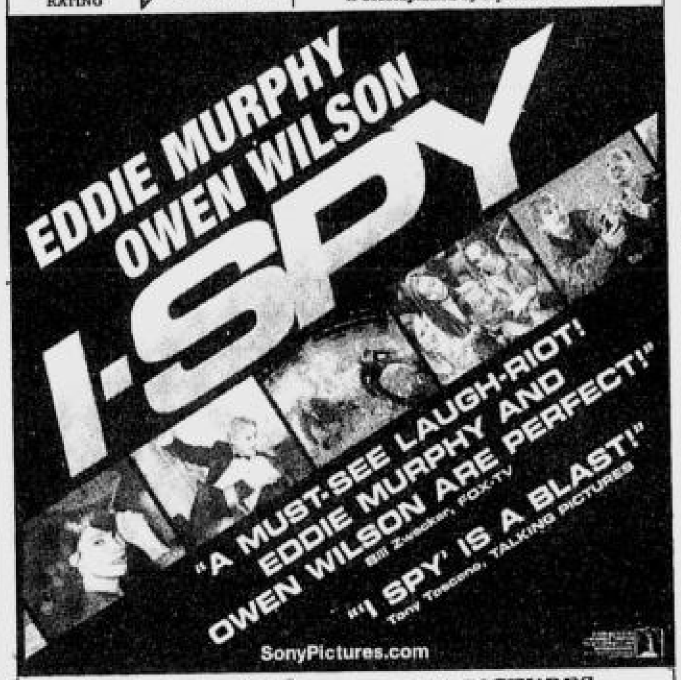

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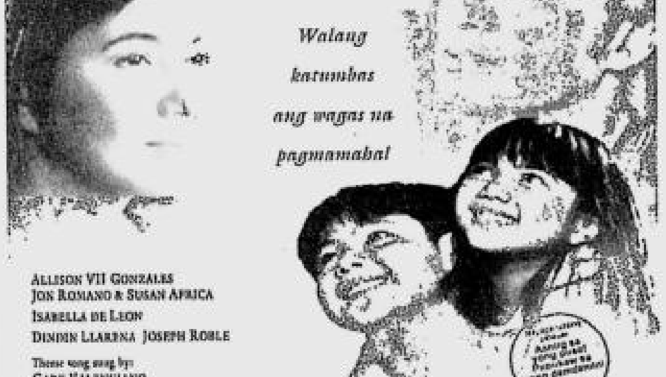

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

'ONE HOUR PHOTO'

Faulty thriller that lacks originality

By Irvin Contreras
Contributor

REVIEW

THERE have been many films about firemen, lawyers, doctors, archaeologists and policemen. Oddly enough, all throughout film history, there have not been a lot of films about photo shop employees. Sandra Bullock played that part, although only briefly, in the romantic-drama, "Hope Floats," opposite Harry Connick Jr. Interestingly, the film was megged by actor Forest Whitaker.

In the psychological thriller "One Hour Photo," writer-director Mark Romanek apparently noticed and created a film with a photo shop employee as its main protagonist.

Lonely and a bit eccentric photo shop attendant named Seymour Parrish is played by Robin Williams, known to the regulars as Sy the "Photo Guy" who, over the years, develops an unnatural fixation on a typical, middle-class, seemingly perfect nuclear family, the Yorkins. They are composed of overworked father Will (Michael Vartan), devoted mother Nina (Connie Nielsen) and sensitive 9-year-old Jake (Dylan Smith).

Obsession

Parrish's obsession goes as far as making himself copies of the photos he took and covering them on the wall of his small apartment in the span of 11 years, covering the time of the couples' honeymoon to the pregnancy to the significant events following the birth of their son.

He even gives the little boy birthday presents, watches him in his soccer practice and at one point, fantasizes about

FAULTY/ A30

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RP seen out of FATF dirty money list soon

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Philippines ready to close 40-year IMF chapter /B8
- RP woos Taiwan firm to join naptha project /B6

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) had assured the Philippines that it would soon be taken out of the list of countries deemed uncooperative in the international drive against money laundering.

Buenaventura, who also chairs the Philippines' Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC), said the FATF was now willing to remove the country from the notorious roster even if the amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering Law, now being finalized in Congress, fell short of the task force's original prescriptions.

The government panel was able to convince the FATF to soften the terms of its compliance standards and to take into account the modifications being considered by the Congress, Buenaventura said. The modifications include the lowering of the threshold being used as basis in the monitoring of bank accounts and the partial lifting of the bank secretary law.

"The modifications were found acceptable since they would allow AMLC to look into all suspicious transactions," Buenaventura said.

The BSP chief also said that both the Senate and the Lower House had promised to pass the amendments before the FATF's Feb. 12 deadline.

Buenaventura said the FATF had given its word to remove the Philippines from the blacklist as soon as these amendments were legislated.

"We're very optimistic that the amendments will be passed, otherwise, there will be additional sanctions on us," he said.

The FATF was formed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, or the so-called First World countries, to crack down on cross-border money laundering.

The FATF had demanded the abolition of the P4-million trigger level prescribed by the anti-money laundering law or Republic Act No. 9160. This provision of the law requires banks and other financial institutions to report to AMLC, for investigation, accounts exceeding P4 million

Instead of removing the threshold, however, Congress brought down the level to P500,000 which was considered in consonance with international standards.

The FATF also wanted the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to secure full access to all deposit accounts.

The lifting of the provision on bank secrecy has been the subject of debate due to security concerns. To address these concerns the provision will be lifted exclusively for money laundering check by the AMLC. It cannot be used by banking regulators for any other purpose.

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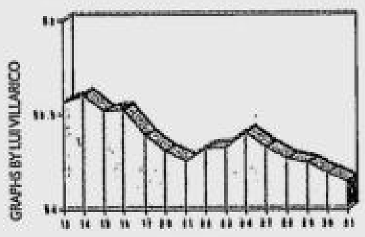

JANUARY

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As of 5 p.m., Jan.31, 2003

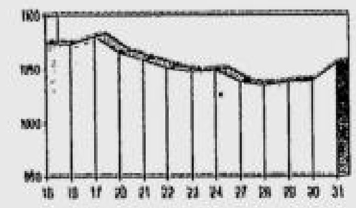
GOLD: $365.90-366.40

per ounce Hong Kong, Jan. 30, 2003

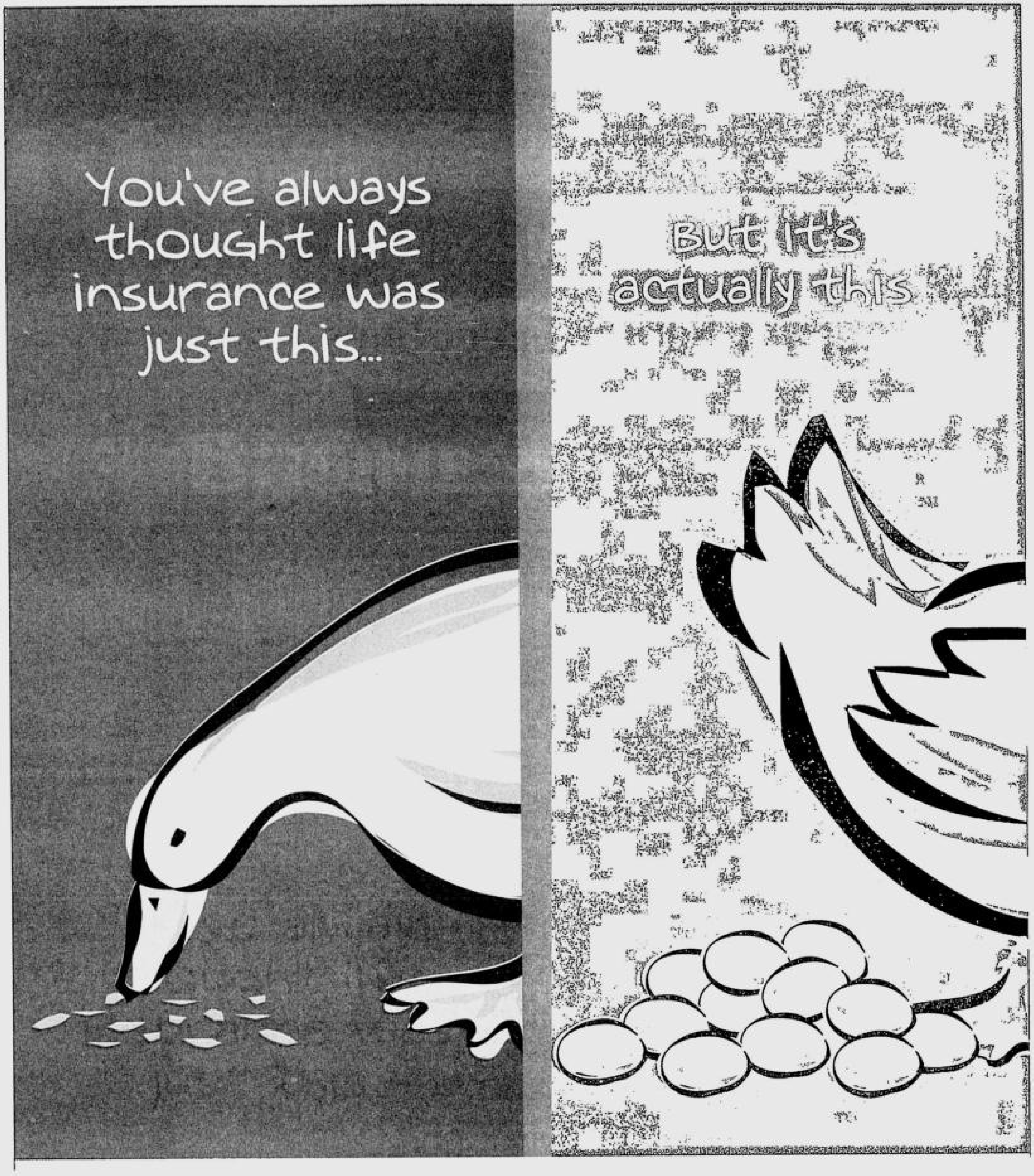
STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

JANUARY



(See stock market report on Page B2)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Stock market seen moving up

By Elena R. Torrijos

MARKET PLAY

THE STOCK market will likely continue moving up this week, according to analysts. They advised investors to pick up well-known blue chip stocks on weaknesses.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index rose 6.27 points to close the month at 1,056.69 compared to the previous week's level. Some analysts attributed the rise to bargain hunting following positive corporate results and a better-than-expected 4.6-percent growth in gross domestic product last year.

"Now, the immediate hurdle that the Phisix needs to overcome is the 1,085 major resistance level. A break of the latter can push the main index up to the 1,150 level," online stock analyst Philstocks.net said. "War or not, the market seems to be poised to sustain its positive performance (this) week.

It noted that the Phisix had again moved above its 50-day moving average on Friday, indicating that the market was showing strength for the medium term.

Jonathan Ravelas, a market strategist of Banco de Oro Universal Bank, also advised investors to expect further tests of the Phisix toward the 1,060 to 1,070 levels.

"I think the market will still be up because I think (President Macapagal-Arroyo's) announcement on Dec. 30 (that she's not running for president in 2004) has a longer-term effect on the market. Also, I think BIR collections are getting better, so I hope the government will meet its targets this year," Joey Roxas, a stock analyst of Eagle Equities Corp., said.

To minimize risk, Philstocks.net recommends that investors build on fundamentally sound stocks that have retraced considerable distance from recent highs.

"We are maintaining our trading stance on the market by buying on weakness and selling on strength," Philstocks said. "Look into issues like Ayala Corp., Filinvest Land Inc. and Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co."

Roxas likewise recommended PLDT and also suggested Manila Electric Co. B and SM Prime shares.

Last week, initial release of 2002 corporate net income showed positive results overall, prodding share prices. Globe share price rose P25 to P530 after reporting a net income increase of 49 percent to P6.8 billion in 2002 from previous year's level.

PLDT, Alcatel sign deal

By Abigail L. Ho

FRENCH telecommunications firm Alcatel SA recently bagged a two-year contract to provide dominant carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. with maintenance and support services for its network traffic management system.

Under the agreement, Alcatel will provide continuous operational support to PLDT's network traffic management system to ensure that it is working efficiently and operating at the highest levels.

This contract follows Alcatel's delivery of PLDT's network traffic management system in 1999. This is one of Alcatel's largest installations in the world.

The system was designed for real-time monitoring and management of PLDT's network traffic flow 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Friday, January 31, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.25	18	17.25	18	66,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	36	36.5	36	36.5	615,600
Citystate Savings Bank	14.75	14.75	14.75	14.75	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.5	18,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	30	31	30	31	291,900
Prudential Bank	400	400	400	400	2,000
Philippine National Bank	26.5	28	26.5	27	19,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	17.5	18	17.5	18	4,800
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.77	0.77	150,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	200,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	935	935	935	935	420
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.75	13.25	12.75	13.25	12,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	40,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	510	530	510	530	7,260
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.026	10,400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.013	0.015	0.013	0.015	2,900,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.14	790,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	295	297.5	292.5	295	61,750
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	12,900,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	8.7	9	8.7	9	117,000
Manila Electric Co. B	12.5	13	12.25	12.75	1,466,400
Petron Corp.	1.64	1.74	1.64	1.74	6,536,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.96	1	0.96	1	290,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.52	1.56	1.52	1.56	411,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	152,000
Negros Navigation Co. Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	50,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	60,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	10,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.2	2.26	2.2	2.26	20,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	17	218,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	34	34	34	34	5,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	57	56.5	56.5	31,900
San Miguel Corp. B	64	65	64	65	340,900
Universal Robina Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	40,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.35	2,461,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.3	2.3	2.26	2.28	244,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	20,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.1	2.1	2	2.1	89,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	20,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.145	0.155	0.145	0.155	2,370,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.11	0.11	0.11	0.11	50,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	460,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.2	1.3	1.1	1.3	5,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	8.9	9.4	8.9	9.4	177,000
Ionics Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	40,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	20,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.58	0.59	2,310,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.155	0.16	0.155	0.16	490,000
Music Corp.	0.12	0.12	0.1	0.11	800,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.032	0.032	0.032	0.032	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	1,130,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Interphil Labs Inc. B	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	168,000
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	6.8	8.1	6.8	8.1	33,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.31	0.34	0.31	0.34	4,100,000
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.09	0.09	0.085	0.085	600,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	13	13.25	13	13.25	48,600
Jollibee Warrants	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	55,700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10	10	10	10	1,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	4.95	4.9	4.95	1,669,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	50,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	3,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	0.91	0.98	0.91	0.98	3,040,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	1.96	2	1.96	2	460,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.024	1,000,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	10,000
SM Development Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	17,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	5,977,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	3,000,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	6,400,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	150,000
Omico Corp.	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	6,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	5,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	100,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	750,000
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	0.0024	15,000,000
Pacifica	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	5,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,271,620	31,392,200.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	53,070,852	101,993,153.00
PRO	15,223,000	43,413,400.00
Mining	21,400,000	1,791,600.00
OIL	20,000,000	76,000.00
GRAND TOTALS :	110,965,472	178,666,353.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	384.64	UP 8.26
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,505.23	UP 22.34
PRO	456.07	UP 5.74
Mining	1,305.63	DOWN 23.15
OIL	1.05	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	627.98	UP 1.23
Composite	1,056.69	UP 16.81

NO. OF ADVANCES: 34; NO. OF DECLINES: 13; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 33; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 80
NO. OF TRADES: 1,320

CURRENCIES

Jan. 31, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	0.923702	1.000000	53.799000
Japan	Yen	0.007762	0.008403	0.452100
United Kingdom	Pound	1.529097	1.655400	89.058900
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118428	0.128210	6.897600
Switzerland	Franc	0.681447	0.737735	39.689400
Canada	Dollar	0.604557	0.654493	35.211100
Singapore	Dollar	0.532026	0.575971	30.986700
Australia	Dollar	0.541665	0.586407	31.548100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.450269	2.652661	142.710500
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.246334	0.266681	14.347200
Brunei	Dollar	0.530498	0.574317	30.897700
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000104	0.000113	0.006100
Thailand	Baht	0.021607	0.023392	1.258500
UAE	Dirham	0.251519	0.272294	14.649100
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.082600	58.242800
Argentina	Peso	0.284216	0.307692	16.553500
Brazil	Real	0.259832	0.281294	15.133300
Denmark	Kroner	0.134496	0.145605	7.833400
India	Rupee	0.019344	0.020942	1.126700
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.243112	0.263193	14.159500
Mexico	New Peso	0.084510	0.091491	4.922100
New Zealand	Dollar	0.502040	0.543508	29.240200
Norway	Kroner	0.134349	0.145446	7.824800
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015871	0.017182	0.924400
South Africa	Rand	0.107161	0.116013	6.241400
Korea	Won	0.000794	0.000860	0.046300
Sweden	Kroner	0.108801	0.117768	6.336900
Syria	Pound	0.017936	0.019417	1.044600
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026736	0.028944	1.557200
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000481	0.000521	0.028000

UnionBank profit up 40%

UNION Bank of the Philippines topped the higher end of market expectations as net income reached P1.54 billion in 2002.

This is 40 percent higher than the previous year's profit of P1.10 billion. Earning per share in 2002 was P2.80, also up 40 percent versus the 2001 level.

The bank generated total revenues of P3.8 billion, up 20.2 percent from P3.2 billion last year. It attributed the higher earnings to the strong growth across its businesses particularly in capital market activity, private banking, cash management and retail banking. The bank's operating efficiency continued to improve as its revenue-to-expense ratio increased from 1.68x in 2001 to 1.84x in 2002.

UnionBank's total resources expanded by 37 percent from P53.7 billion in December 2001 to P73.5 billion in December 2002 driven by a 49.4-percent increase in deposit liabilities from P28.0 billion in 2001 to P41.9 billion as of Dec. 31, 2002.

Capital funds reached P13.5 billion as of end-December 2002. This resulted in a risk-adjusted capital adequacy ratio of 38.67 percent, almost four times the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' minimum requirement of 10 percent and more than twice the industry's 16.7 percent.

The bank had set aside P250 million in additional loan loss reserves in 2002 to bring its reserve cover to 84 percent, among the highest in the industry. UnionBank's non-performing loans as against total loans stood at 11.32 percent, lower than the industry's average of 16.36 percent as of end-October. As a percentage of total resources, the bank's non-performing loans amounted to only 4.49 percent as of Dec. 31, 2002, about half the banking industry's average of 8.38 percent as of September 2002.

Recently, the December 2002 issue of Euromoney, a leading international journal on capital and money markets, ranked UnionBank as one of the best companies in Asia based on its survey of market analysts in major banks and research institutes across Asia.

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- Business Management Game

Prof. Grace S. Ugut, PhD is the Assistant Dean of the Executive Education and Lifelong Learning (EXCELL) Center and concurrently the Program Director of the Executive MBA Program in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Her research focus is on her fields of expertise: capital market development and derivative instruments. She is engaged in banking and finance namely treasury, risk management, corporate finance, and fixed income securities.

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Escalation for Escaler

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

INVESTMENT banker Noel Escaler and his lawyer Katrina Legarda did not show up in last Thursday's mediation meeting called by Pasig Regional Trial Court Judge Isagani Geronimo between Escaler and his former live-in partner, Ma. Corazon "Mariko" Jacinto.

According to the grapevine, Escaler got wind of Jacinto's difficulty in raising the estimated P400,000 filing fee for the civil suit that would have put a lien on Escaler's Pacific Plaza Towers penthouse, club shares and bank deposits that Jacinto is also claiming "co-ownership" on the strength of their having lived together as common-law couple.

But with his property unencumbered, the Hong Kong-based banker is apparently now willing to slug it out in court with the woman he was supposed to have promised to bring to the altar rather than settle the messy business amicably.

According to court records, Jacinto, a painter who is into Buddhism, rejected a "release, waiver and quitclaim" that the banker had asked her to sign before he releases a promised P9-million settlement, to be paid in installment.

Escaler then barred Jacinto from their P65-million love nest, giving written instructions to the guards, after Jacinto's lawyer Lorna Kapunan wrote back to raise the financial demand to P20 million.

"He'd rather see the millions go to the lawyers than give them to Mariko," said another ex-girlfriend of Escaler.

"She should be grateful Noel sent her to New York for a year of art lessons. He even put her up at the Essex House (an apartment-hotel on South Central Park) and even gave her an allowance, and an Amex Centurion card at that," the ex-girlfriend sniffed.

Jacinto, who is now living in a modest apartment in the middle-class side of Makati and reduced to taking public transportation, claims her P1.8-million savings is still

COCKTALES/ B8

Korean firms join mining project

By Christine A. Gaylican

SOUTH Korean trading house LG Corp. and state-run investing firm Korean Resources Corp. will invest $10 million in a Philippine metal mining project in Albay, Legaspi.

LG Corp. and Korean Resources Corp. signed a contract last week with Manila-based Australian mining firm Lafayette (Philippines) Inc., which owns the mining rights to the $45-million Rapu Rapu Poly-

KOREAN/ B6

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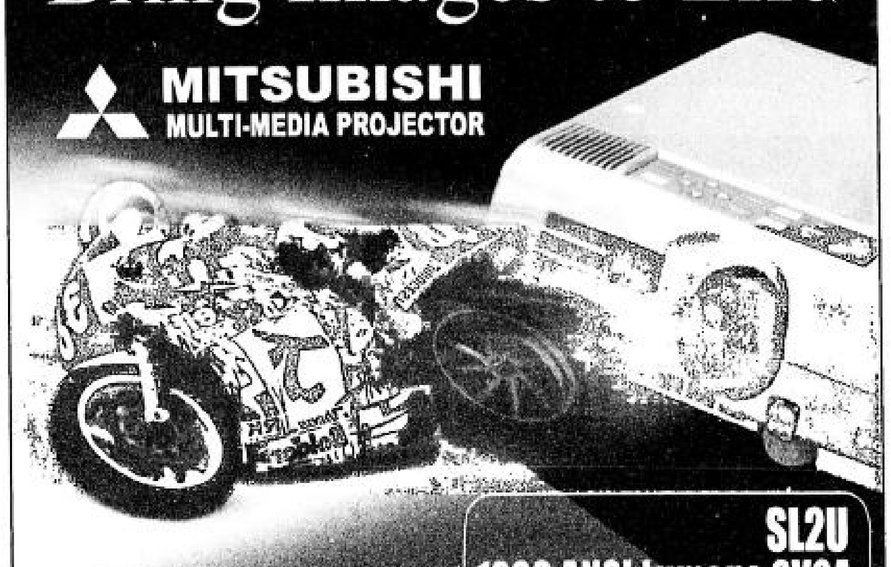

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Of silly instructions, the Chinese New Year and war

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

CHIEF UN Weapons Inspector HANS BLIX is asking for more time, but I doubt if President Bush can keep his HANS off Iraq for much longer. When told that this is the Year of the Goat, the President said, "Good, now we can goat to war."

After 50 years of believing that I was born in the Year of the Horse, I recently discovered that I was actually born in the Year of the Snake. No wonder I am such a good adder, and when I have a runny nose, a good viper. Sometimes, I can be a bit of a boa. For the Chinese New Year, I bought myself a beautiful golden money tree. I felt sure it was made in China or Hong Kong but on the bottom was stamped" "Product of the International Money Tree Fund."

After six years of marriage, I still have misunderstandings with my wife. I said to her quite innocently, "How would you like your eggs?" Sensing lustful desire, she replied, "Unfertilized." Once, she had a sylph-like figure, but alas she did not take care of her sylph. Last week, we attended a fete worse than death. The lights in the Chinese restaurant were so bright that I asked the waiter to dim some. In Divisoria, she bought a beautiful BUCHI bag from Shanghai. I am KUNG HEI: she is FAT CHOI.

A reader sent me the following instructions found on various items:

Computers—Your male attachment can be a 3-1/2 inch floppy.

Hairdryer—Do not use while sleeping.

Fritos—You can win a prize. No purchase necessary. Details inside.

Frozen dinners—Suggestion, defrost first.

Bread pudding—Product will be hot after heating.

Steam iron—Do not iron clothes on body.

Children's cough medicine—Do not drive a car after taking this.

Sleeping pills—May cause drowsiness.

American Airline packet of nuts—Open packet, eat nuts.

Dishwashing liquid—Do not use on food.

***

There was a young fellow called Lancelot
Whose sole desire was to romance a lot.
Whenever he'd pass
A presentable lass
The front of his pants would advance a lot.

There was a young woman whose suitor,
Treated her just like a computer,
She let him log-on,
But she told him, "Be gone"
Whenever he tried to reboot her.

* * *

Undoubtedly, the major event of the week was the State of the Union Address. While it was being broadcast here in Tektite, trading came to a complete standstill (nothing unusual) until the end of his well-delivered speech. He had numerous standing ovulations, which showed it was an egg-cell-ent speech. While he had the backing of most of the Senate and Congress as far as Iraq is concerned, he did not have the support of the Democrats on his budget stimulus for the economy.

The bulk of the $674 million will go to the rich, but as he does not have control of the Senate, there is likely to be a compromise, possibly acceding to the Democrat's insistence that everybody should get a $300 rebate. As this would benefit the poor, who would spend it, it would be a greater stimulus than his current proposals. At first sight, an injection of $674 million seems a huge amount, but the American economy is $1 trillion, so that even with an extra $400 million, it represents a stimulus of only 1 percent.

The Americans should study what happened to the Japanese. Starting in 1980, they had years of prosperity during which they built up a huge amount of manufacturing capacity, much of which was channeled into exports. The Nikkei reached almost 40,000 and giant telecom firm NTT was selling at 250 times earnings. Suddenly, demand was not there, partly because other countries like Korea managed to capture some of their markets, such as shipbuilding. With factories working well below capacity, profits fell, but the Japanese culture, which provides lifelong employment for employees, made it impossible for them to fire staff. So company profits plummeted, and the Nikkei fell almost 80 percent to 8,000.

The government reduced interest rates to zero, but to no avail. They obstinately refused to lay off staff until bankruptcies reached all-time high levels. After 12 years and numerous budget stimuli, Japan remains in recession, and the index is still near the bottom. The banks have huge nonperforming loans, and despite the promises of the prime minister, he has still not knuckled down to merging some banks, letting others go under, and printing money. The recession shows no sign of ending, and the Nikkei remains near its low.

The Americans, in the decade starting in 1990, increased their capacity enormously through the use of computers and the Internet. The result was a 10-year bubble, which burst in 2000, with horrific results to investors. Reducing interest rates dramatically certainly staved off a major recession, and the fiscal stimuli helped, but there are still no clear signs of consumer spending increasing significantly, and, therefore, no certainty that the economy will pick up. The major difference has been that the manufacturing industry laid off 1.8 million employees, making companies much more efficient. Inflation is not a problem, as competitors fight to retain their share of the market and dare not increase prices. Deflation may be a greater threat. The 4th quarter GNP rose by a disappointing 0.7 percent.

From 1950 to 1980, when I was in the London stock market, we tended to have a four-year cycle, which amazingly coincided with the elections held every four years. The United States also has four-year cycle and in the same years. Normally, a bull market would last an average of 27 to 30 months and a bear market 15 months. The ratio of bull to bear was approximately 2 to 1. The US economy rose non-stop from 1990 to 2000, and if this ratio holds good, the US market will not recover until 2005.

Last week, I wrote that the average P/E ratio over 50 years on the S&P 500 had been 16.2. Even with the fall that took place last week, the P/E is still a daunting 28. Alan Greenspan has his work cut out if he is to shorten the time period of the bear market. *(Email the author at mrbearbull@hotmail.com)*

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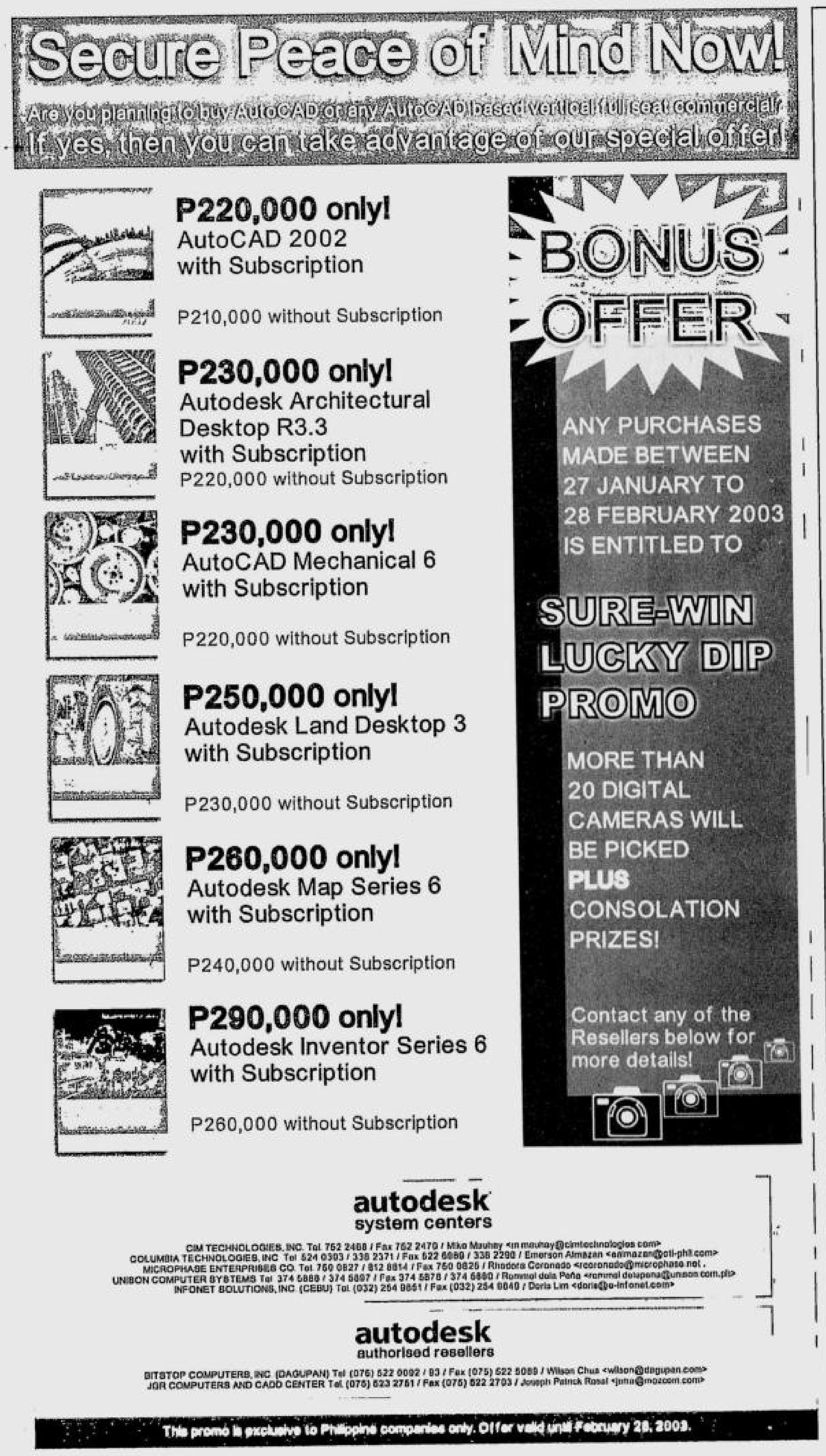

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IMF expects RP deficit to hit P263B this year

By Clarissa S. Batino

EXPECTING a strong pre-election spending, the International Monetary Fund has projected the government's budget deficit to swell to P262.88 billion this year or to 6.2 percent of the gross domestic product.

The government, however, vowed to contain its fiscal gap this year at P202 billion or 4.6 percent of the GDP. The IMF, in its 'unofficial' forecast on the Philippines' prospects after a regular post-loan visit last December, said the GDP this year would grow by only 3.5 percent, against an earlier forecast of 3.8 percent and the government's target of 4.2 to 5.2 percent.

A 3.5-percent GDP growth will be equivalent to P4.24 trillion while a 3.5- percent growth in gross national product will translate to P4.496 trillion, the IMF's computations showed.

The IMF, however, missed in its growth projections for the Philippines last year. It projected the GDP to grow by 4 percent and the GNP by 4.1 percent while actual figures hit 4.6 percent and 5.2 percent, respectively.

IMF/B7

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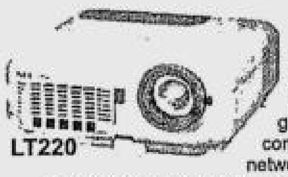

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The new LT260 projector feature superior image quality thanks to their 1300:1 contrast ratio and to NEC's exclusive VORTEX Technology Plus color management system. This technology provides the most comprehensive color management system on the market available today, including an sRGB setting, individual color adjustment and white balance correction.

The LT220 and LT260 also feature Advanced Accublend technology for excellent display of non-native resolutions up to UXGA, AutoSense Technology for automatic setup and one-touch adjustments and a built-in presentation viewer that lets users download presentations onto a CompactFlash and leave the laptop at home. They also incorporate Eco-made technology to conserve lamp life in environments where the full projector brightness isn't needed and a stand-by mode that reduces projector power usage to under 1W when not in active use.

NEC's new LT Series projectors are now available via NEC Singapore's accredited dealers in the Philippines.

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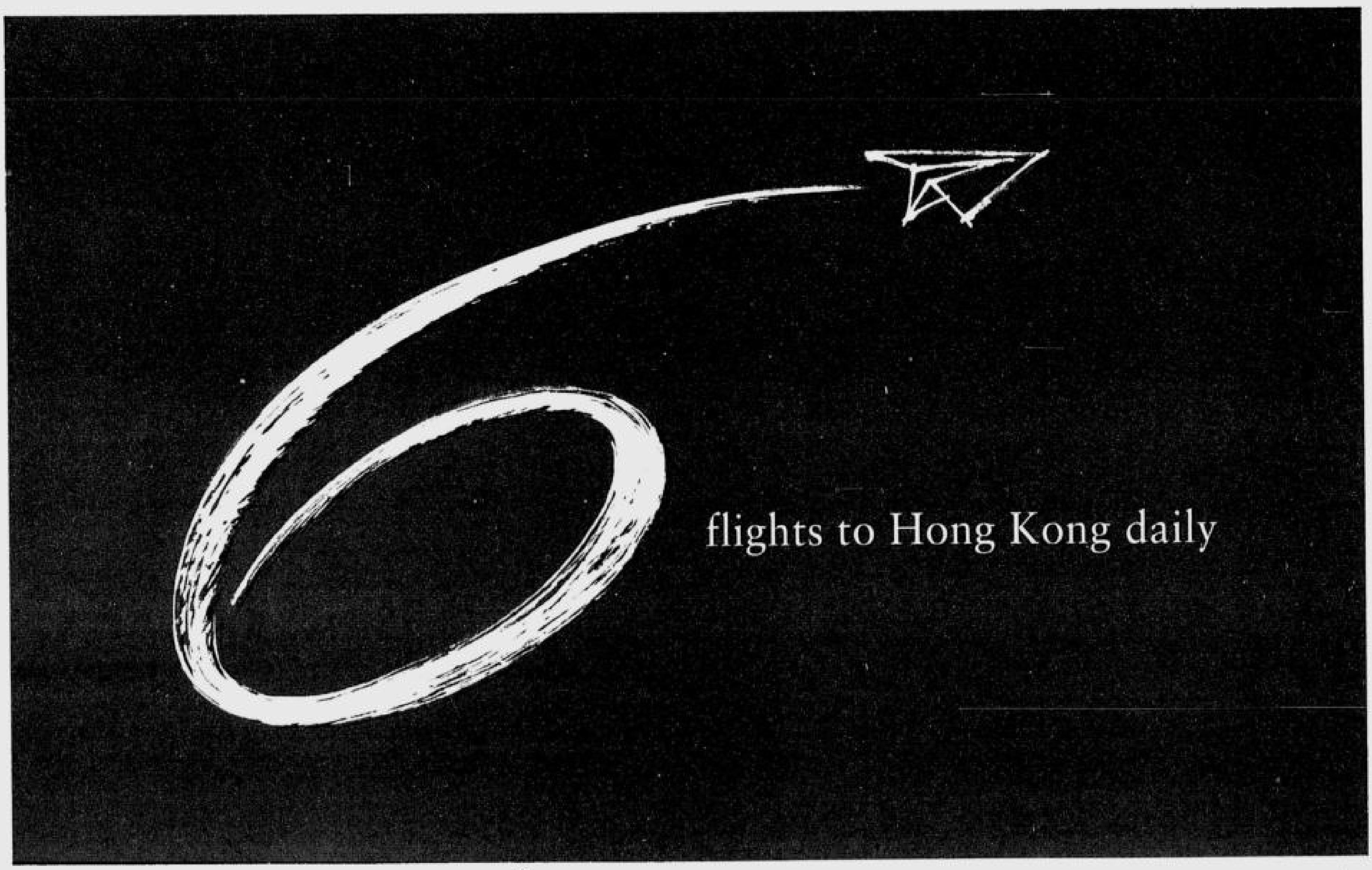
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RP woos Taiwan firm to join naphtha project

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

CHINESE Petroleum Corp. of Taiwan is being urged to take a second look at the long-delayed naphtha cracker project in Bataan which got a boost from Malacanang's decision to defer tariff cuts on plastic resins for two more years.

Manila Economic and Cultural Office chair and chief executive officer Antonio I. Basilio said officials of PNOC Petrochemical Development Corp. (PPDC), the lead proponent of the naphtha cracker project, flew to Taiwan last month to woo CPC in taking an equity stake in the $600-million project.

Basilio said the CPC officials would first seek the nod of Taiwan state authorities before making a decision on the naphtha cracker project.

Meco had long been courting Taiwanese petrochemical giants CPC and Formosa to consider the Philippines as an alternative site for at least five cracker plants that they plan to build this decade.

The state-owned CPC had expressed interest in joining PPDC's consortium that would build the cracker in 2000 but it backed out due to differences with other consortium members.

Over the last two years, PPDC, however, has been unable to finalize a deal to build the project with rumored investors Sultan of Brunei and Petronas of Malaysia and one of its key allies, Bataan Polyethylene Corp., have folded up.

PPDC apparently wants CPC to fill the slack in view of its commitment to start the cracker project within the next two years in exchange for Malacañang's move to invoke the Asean protocol to defer the tariff cut on plastic resins.

Duties on mid-stream plastic products such as polypropylene and polyethylene were scheduled to be cut from 15 percent to 5 percent starting this year with the onset of the Asean Free Trade Area. But the government decided to reduce duties halfway to 10 percent to give the petrochemical industry at least two years to strengthen their operations and the cracker to be put in place before the market was opened to more resin imports.

Mindanao's need to fly high

MINDANAO ONE

Joji Ilagan-Bian

THE PAST month saw the Mindanao Business Council (MBC) actively crusading for the President's signing of Executive Order No. 170, promoting private sector investments in Roll-on Roll off (Ro-Ro) Terminal Systems (RRTS).

Not to sound like a broken record, but while we stress that the Ro-Ro is not a panacea to our problem of high shipping costs, this nevertheless translates to easing our transportation woes, as it aims to create a Mindanao Ro-Ro highway (dubbed by our President as the "nautical highway") that shall enhance our network with the rest of the country and beyond.

Thus, in the MBC's continued pursuit of reducing the cost of doing business and promoting economic development in Mindanao, we now move from the sea onto the air and tackle yet another issue—that of "open skies" in Mindanao.

As early as the 5th Mindanao Business Conference, the MBC called for the granting of Fifth Freedom Traffic Rights (FFTR) between Mindanao and the rest of the Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines-East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-Eaga).

The 1944 Convention on International Civil Aviation held in Chicago signed the International Air Transport Agreement, which essentially contains five basic freedoms of the air. In a nutshell, the freedoms of the air or freedom traffic rights are privileges granted by a government to an international airline registered in another country during negotiations pertinent to air services agreement. These freedom traffic rights granted by governments, which are usually done on a reciprocal basis, are strict guidelines on how foreign airlines are to operate within and over its airspace.

All the first four freedom rights are limited to only two countries, except for the FFTR which necessitates the inclusion of a third country. As defined, FFTR is the "privilege to bring passengers and cargo from one country (country A) to another country (country B), other than the home country of the airline (country C)." As far as the MBC is concerned, its principal preference to the FFTR lies in the belief that FFTR will allow foreign airlines from the Eaga to service the vacant routes in the BIMP-Eaga. This stems from the premise that the privilege to bring passengers and cargo from one country to the Philippines other than the home country of the airline will prove to be more profitable than the existing system of city pairing. The prospect of more direct international flights to and from Mindanao would have had partly resolved the dilemma of Mindanao export products having to ply circuitous routes to get to their destination, thus, making freight cost more competitive. Likewise, increased air linkages would have had the desired effect of improving the movement of people and goods, thereby, boosting trade and tourism.

Back in 2000, the MBC and its partners got the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) to issue a resolution granting FFTR to BIMP-Eaga routes in Mindanao. Sadly, in the absence of corresponding air negotiation agreements with the other countries concerned, FFTR in Mindanao remains unimplemented.

Lately, with the coming implementation of the air transport agreement between the Philippines and the United States, the national debates on the merits of a liberalization of air access has once again taken off (no pun intended). At the crux of these debates is the issue of whether or not to adopt an "open skies" policy in the Philippines. This policy of a liberalized aviation industry connotes any one or all of the following: unlimited frequency of flights, unlimited capacity, removal of restrictions on the type of aircraft, and in certain cases where laws of specific countries permit, include cabotage, or allowing a foreign airline to fly a domestic route.

This has led the Mindanao business community to consider, among others, "open skies" as an option to improve air services in Mindanao. The MBC has just recently started its sojourn into this new policy area, inviting Philippine Airlines (PAL) president and COO Avelino Zapanta to give his views on the matter to the board membership of the MBC. Earlier, we also listened to the views of the Freedom to Fly Coalition, a group favoring the aforementioned policy.

Whatever the MBC decides on in terms of the most appropriate policy recommendation, the objectives are clear: make the civil aviation industry more responsive to Mindanao business needs, improve trading and tourism, increase the number and frequency of direct international flights in Mindanao, and reduce freight costs. As a tactical measure, we believe that the immediate priority is to get a Mindanaoan in the Air Negotiation Panel to push for the island economy's interests. These are to ensure increased BIMP-Eaga flights and implement the FFTR, develop Davao City as a regional hub for Southeast Asia through the establishment of new air services, create domestic flights to key cities in Mindanao (the "spokes"), and invite airlines that are searching for new opportunities to serve Mindanao. At the moment only Bouraq and Perpati Airlines' Davao to Manado fly the BIMP-Eaga routes.

As we have done with the shipping industry, the MBC shall work relentlessly with the advocacy. In our endeavor to promote Mindanao's economic development, the MBC shall once again soar high. No pun intended.

(The author is the chair of the Mindanao Business Council and vice president of the East Asean Business Council.)

Korean firms ...

From page B3

metallic Mining Project.

According to Lafayette country manager Rod D. Watt, the $10 million that the South Korean investors will infuse into the project will allow the joint venture to acquire 26 percent of interest in the project. LG Corp. will contribute to the project $6 million which will entitle the company to a 15.6-percent equity in the project.

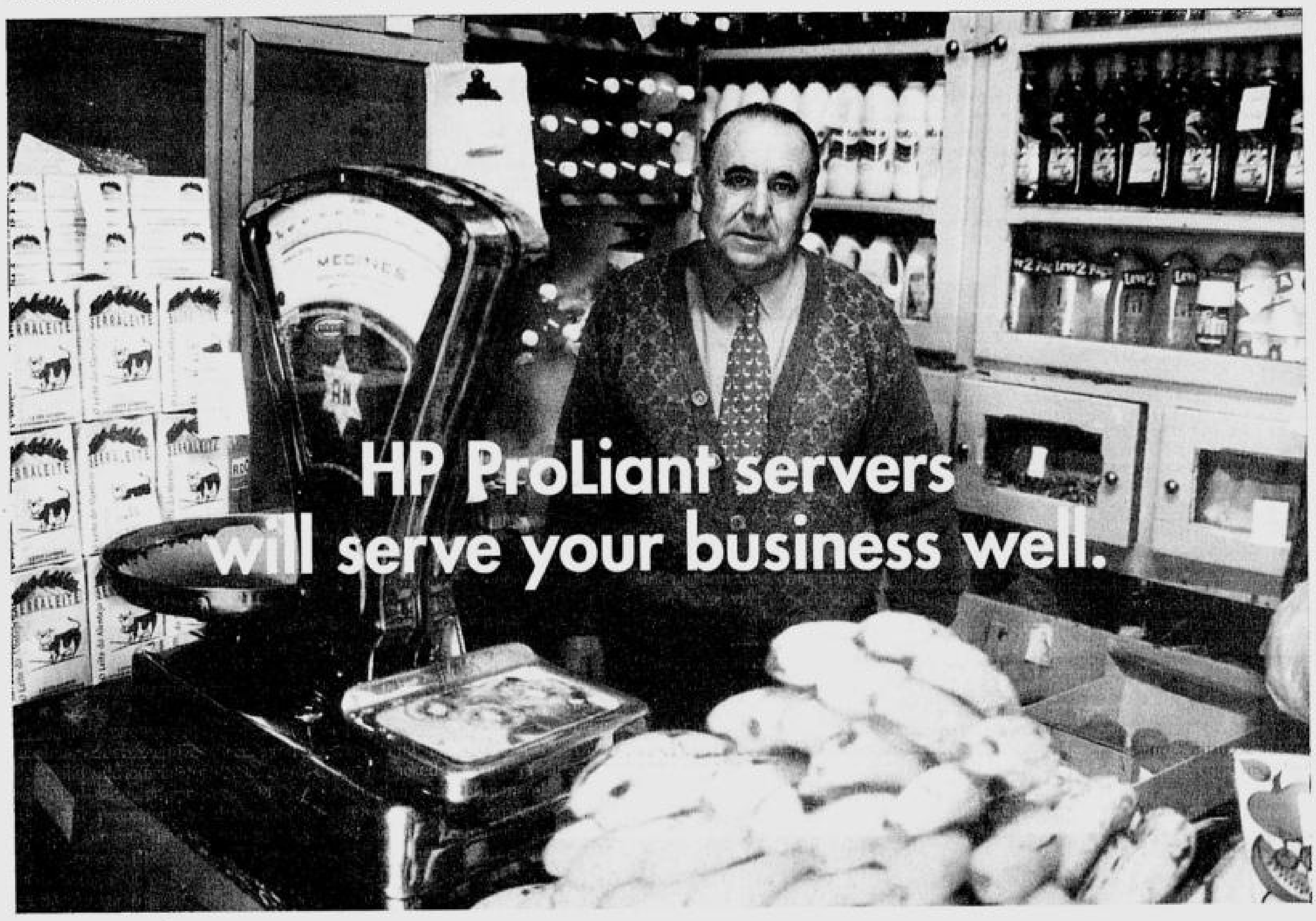
"The Korean investors will have an off-take arrangement with Lafayette as LG will buy all of the copper and zinc concentrates produced by the project," Watt added.

The mining project is expected to yield 37,000 tons of copper concentrates, 25,000 tons of zinc and 50,000 ounces of gold annually in the next four to five years.

Watt said proponents have yet to finalize a similar arrangement for the gold production.

According to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, the Rapu Rapu mining project has a potential to deliver some $41 million in additional revenues to the Philippine government yearly.

Lafayette is on track with the mining project development. Exploration and feasibility studies were completed last year, said Watt.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Professionals: Living with VAT

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

ONE would think that the deafening uproar against slapping the value-added tax on professionals would be spearheaded by loquacious lawyers from the bar association. Instead, the medical doctors marched with movie and TV stars and, with surgical masks off, swung away with their scalpels, so to speak.

But, it was clear from the furor that, like the entertainment people, the doctors know little about the workings of the VAT system. Or, maybe, they know it only too well.

It will help to clear things up if we stop mixing income tax with value-added tax. The income tax is a tax on your net taxable income, defined as your gross income minus all deductions or expenses allowed by the tax code. Income tax is always payable from your own pocket.

Poor Dolphy, seen as the top earner in the entertainment industry, is being crucified for paying P2.5 million only in income tax. Why doesn't BIR look into his deductions? If there are illegal deductions, throw the book at him. But, until then, let us take Dolphy down from his cross.

The value-added tax is a tax on the sale of goods or services. It is slapped on the seller, but the law allows him to pass it on to the buyer. A doctor is considered the seller, his patient is the buyer. When a doctor issues his patient a receipt for P500, and the receipt says nothing about VAT, the law presumes that the tax is included in the P500. The net income to the doctor is P454.55 (let's not go into how I arrived at this figure; just take my word, please). If the doctor wants to keep his P500 intact, he must charge the patient an extra P50. The receipt must clearly be itemized, thus: P500 medical fee, P50 VAT.

The trouble is doctors, like all taxpayers, cheat on their income tax by issuing no receipts. And they want their fee in cold cash. I met a neurologist once who insisted that his P16,000 fee for reading a CT Scan be paid in cash, and no receipt, please. I told him where to go, asked the hospital to include his fee in the bill, and I covered the whole amount with my credit card.

With the imposition of VAT on professional fees, the doctor can very well tell his patient, "If you want a receipt, I will charge you P550 in all; if you want to pay only P500, I will issue you no receipt, and I will accept no checks, please." Such deals have been negotiated all over the country since President Aquino introduced the VAT in 1987.

But, some patients, especially insurance brokers or agents, will insist on receipts. The patient does not mind paying the extra P50 because he will deduct this from the VAT that he collects from his clients. For his part, the doctor can charge the VAT he pays on his purchases against the VAT he collects from his patients.

But once the doctor issues his receipt, he will have to declare the P500 as income subject to the income tax. From this view, the income tax and the value-added tax, although different, are actually related. Strict compliance with VAT rules will result in higher income tax revenue.

Then, the doctor will have to keep accounting records. But computerization should make things easier. Hiring a part time accountant should not cost too much. And the doctor runs his clinic like a business. What's wrong with that?

The VAT on doctors' fees will have little or no impact on the poor. The poor do not go to the doctors' cubicles at Makati Med, St. Luke's, or Chinese General. They go to the barangay clinics where service is free. If hospitalized, they find a bed in the charity ward.

My suggestion to the professionals is to stop their media campaign and buckle down to understanding the workings of the VAT system. Professional fees have been exempt from the tax since 1994. It is time the exemption should stop. If insurance brokers and agents have been able to live with VAT, so should all the other professionals.

Portfolio investments inflow seen in January

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE PORTFOLIO investments inflow this year is off to a good start with some $29.3 million coming in during the first two weeks of January, outpacing the outflow of $24.2 million, data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas showed.

The modest net inflow of $4.9 million reverses the net outflow of $37.8 million in January 2002.

"The portfolio inflows increased due to the improved appetite of the market for government papers," said BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr.

This year, the BSP expects portfolio investors to commit more funds to the local market as the Macapagal administration strives to boost investor confidence amid weak global prospects.

Foreign portfolio funds are usually invested in the stock market, government securities, mutual funds and insurance.

The benchmark 91-day treasury bill rate went up by 12.7 basis points to 5.248 percent two weeks ago. Although still modest, the yield on this paper was more than three percent higher than comparative treasuries in the United States.

The premium paid by the Philippines to its creditors factors in bigger potential risks. This premium is expected to increase in the coming months given the huge deficit that the government will have to finance with foreign and local borrowings.

Net portfolio investments grew 194 percent last year to $202 million from $68.7 million in 2001.

Gov't expands campaign against illegal LPG trade

THE GOVERNMENT, through the National Bureau of Investigation, is expanding its surveillance of alleged illegal liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinder refilling operations in Southern Tagalog following reports alleging that the provinces of Batangas and Quezon have become the biggest area of operations for this illicit trade.

The NBI started last year a nationwide crackdown on the illegal trade following complaints by homeowners and local governments that establishments involved were posing serious threats to their communities.

The crackdown resulted in the recent filing of charges by the Department of Justice (DOJ) against Omni Gas Corp.and Republic Gas Corp. based in Pasig City and Malabon, respectively. Also charged following a series of raids by the NBI were Northland Gas Corp. in Laoag City and Romars International Gases Corp. Bicol.

NBI initial reports alleged that illegal refillers were coercing LPG outlets to market their unauthorized products. The NBI said it would look "deep into the root of the illegal trade" in the region and flush out the syndicates behind the racket.

The NBI repeated its warning that the operations of illegal refillers posed serious risks to the safety of both households and commercial establishments. Illegally-refilled LPG cylinders, the NBI said, do not have the safety features of the standard authorized products.

IMF sees RP deficit . . .

From page B5

Much of the Fund's concerns on fiscal performance this year are due to the expected spending in preparation to the presidential polls next year.

Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said it was up to the government to prove the IMF wrong.

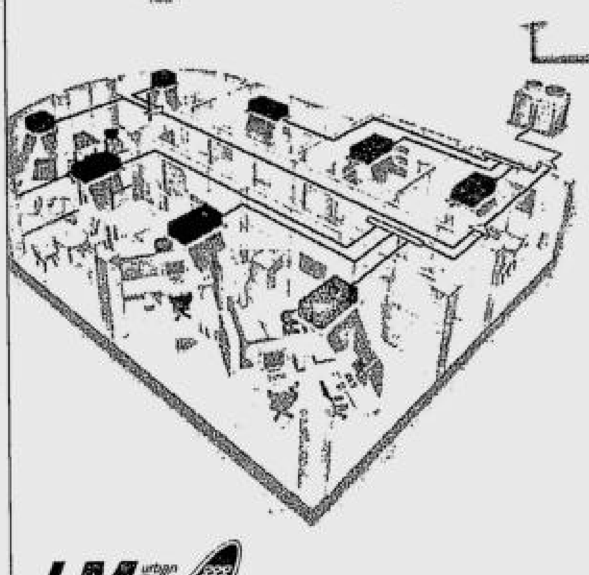
"Because of what happened in 2002, everybody will tend to estimate a higher deficit. We can't help that but we have to do our best to prove them wrong," said Boncodin.

In 2002, the government hoped but failed to contain its deficit at P130 billion. It later increased the target to P223 billion.

The IMF believed that expenditures would hit 20.2 percent of the GDP or P856.48 billion while revenues would be about 14 percent of the GDP or P593.6 billion, which would be better than the government's target of P584.1 billion.

The government said it would limit spending to P786.1 billion in 2003 from P778.7 billion last year.

The Fund is projecting that the consolidated public sector deficit will reach P351.92 billion or 8.3 percent of GDP against the government's CPSD projection of P327.5 billion or 7.6 percent of GDP.



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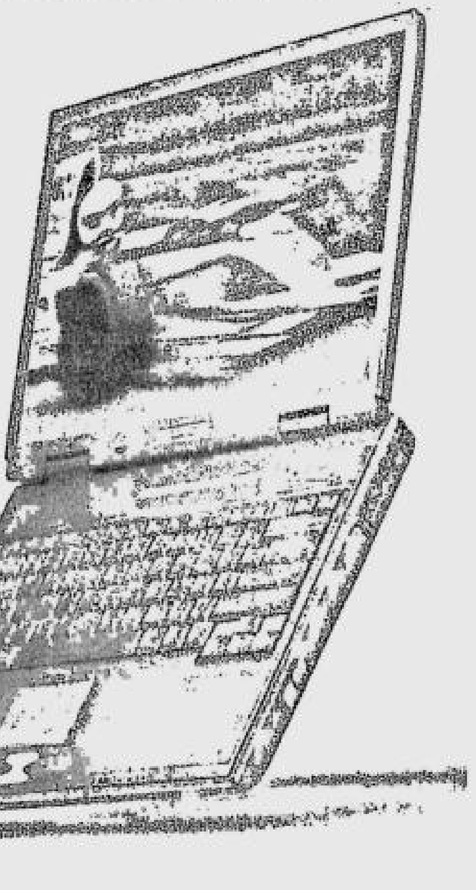

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TIME CONSUMING AND EXPENSIVE

Philippines ready to close 40-year IMF chapter

By Clarissa S. Batino and Doris C. Dumlao

AFTER four decades, the Philippines is set to finally close a chapter with the International Monetary Fund once the country completes a two-year post-loan arrangement with the IMF in September.

The Philippines is ready to put an end to a "time-consuming" and "expensive" economic monitoring arrangement with the IMF, Bangko Sentral Governor Rafael Buenaventura said in a news briefing on Friday.

"We felt that after a year, there's sufficient monitoring that's being done on our own and also with the four international credit rating agencies," Buenaventura, who chairs the government panel negotiating with the IMF, said.

According to Buenaventura, the Philippines holds the distinction of having enjoyed the longest series of programs with the IMF since 1962.

He said ending the IMF program would also allow the government to cut its spending since it was shouldering the costs of the twice-a-year visits of the IMF's representatives to the Philippines.

It is no longer necessary to maintain an arrangement with the IMF after the post-program monitoring ends, especially since foreign credit rating agencies have been providing financial markets their objective assessment on the Philippines, Buenaventura said.

"We have existing arrangements with foreign credit rating agencies. We already have a monitoring from them, which is just as thorough," he said.

Under the post-program monitoring, the IMF conducts a twice-a-year review of the Philippines' progress using its prescriptions and the government's targets as bases in rating the country's performance.

Over the last 40 years, financial markets have relied on the IMF's findings to guide their business and investment decisions, although there has been less dependence on the institution's stamp of approval since the Philippines ended its loan program in 2000.

The Philippines forged 23 programs with the IMF.

Buenaventura said the IMF's post-program monitoring proved to be futile in complementing other loan arrangements.

A case in point, he said, was the Chang Mai initiative among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations that required countries seeking to maximize any bilateral loan arrangements to be placed under a loan program with the IMF.

Despite forging a $3-billion and $1.5-billion currency swap arrangements with Japan and China, the Philippines could only avail an amount equivalent to 10 percent of the deal in the absence of an IMF loan program.

"We thought the PPM could be a substitute, but it was not," Buenaventura said.

The Philippines entered into a post-program monitoring arrangement with the IMF in early 2001 after it decided to terminate the last part of a $1.44-billion IMF loan package. The country felt it no longer needed the IMF's assistance, which was tied to certain economic benchmarks that, at the time, were hard to meet.

The post-program monitoring is not linked to any financial package and instead aims solely to earn marks for good housekeeping.

"We can do our own monitoring, and we'll just give a one-year report to them. That should minimize our cost," Buenaventura told reporters.

"It is probably unnecessary to continue it. The reviews are often expensive and time-consuming. We'll just go back to them when there is an emergency," he said.

When the post-program monitoring began in 2001, the country's outstanding loans of $1.77 billion with the IMF exceeded its loan quota of $1.16 billion.

Dividends for Valentine's cash, anyone?

By Michelle V. Remo

VALENTINE'S Day is fast approaching, and couples with wallets too thin for anything truly special may have a reason to rejoice—that is, if they had, at one time or another, invested in stocks.

They may not know it, but they could still have dividends uncollected from their brokers.

To help investors know whether they still have dividends to collect, and to help brokers deliver the unclaimed dividends from investors who have changed their addresses, the Philippine Stock Exchange is launching the "Hanap Dividendo" program.

PSE Chair Vivian Yuchengco said the Hanap Dividendo program is the PSE's gift to the public in time for Valentine's Day.

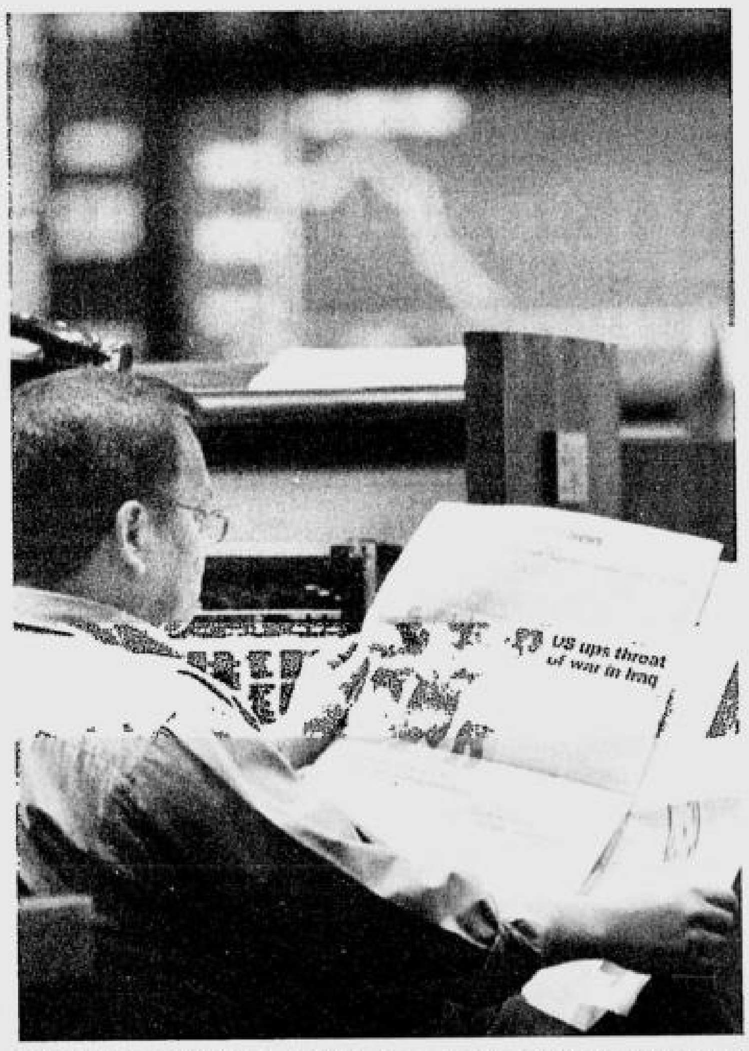
Under the program, the stock exchange is currently collecting a list of all unclaimed dividends from all brokers and will post it on its website (www.pse.gov.ph) before Valentine's Day.

The governance committee of the stock exchange said a partial list of names of recipients and the dividends due them ranged from a few centavos to a high of P19,000.

The committee also said investors who lacked Internet access could call the stock exchange to verify whether they still had uncollected dividends.

Existing rules of the PSE authorizes the compliance and surveillance group to penalize brokers who do not distribute dividends to clients on time.

The group said, however, that some brokers were having a hard time delivering all dividends since some investors have already changed their addresses.


US ups threat of war in Iraq

A TRADER at the Philippine Stock Exchange checks a daily for the latest news here and abroad. The stock market has been on a slump for such a long time now that most investors have stopped keeping track of their stocks. Yet, there may still be some money there in the form of uncollected stock and cash dividends. The PSE is helping investors to find out with its "Hanap Dividendo" program. AFP

URC earmarks $50M-$75M for acquisition

By Elena R. Torrijos

UNIVERSAL Robina Corp., the Gokongwei family's food manufacturing unit, plans to use the proceeds from its recent $125-million notes issue to acquire more domestic or regional branded food businesses and to help fund a P2-billion capital outlay.

URC president Lance Gokongwei told reporters Friday that the biggest acquisition that the company could make this year should involve only $50 million to $75 million because anything larger was feared to negatively impact on the Ba3 rating assigned to the firm's debt by Moody's International Services.

"Any acquisition we will make must help preserve that rating and give us a good return on our investment," Gokongwei said.

Gokongwei said that the bond proceeds would also fund the company's P2 billion in capital expenditures allocated for this fiscal year ending September. About P900 million will be spent for the establishment of a flour mill in Pasig by August this year. The new flour mill will allow the Gokongwei's food arm to double its capacity up to 550 tons a day.

URC also aims to put up this year a chocolate manufacturing plant in Indonesia and a chocolate, snacks or biscuits factory in Vietnam.

Moreover, the company will finance the upgrading of its manufacturing plant of bi-axially oriented polypropylene to double its production of the plastic packaging films for sale to the domestic and export markets.

These initiatives are seen to support the company's 15-percent revenue growth target for the fiscal year.

Ford has P488M in unpaid taxes, BOC exec claims

By Armand N. Nocum

THE BUREAU of Customs has ordered Ford Motor Co. Philippines Inc. to pay over P488 million worth of taxes for 4,366 vehicles imported over three years.

The auto assembler has contested the order, saying the issue that the bureau has raised is "old" and has already been resolved in its favor.

"It's a mistake by different agencies on the interpretation of taxes because they have different ways of looking at taxes," Ford Philippines president Henry Co told the INQUIRER.

"We are a member of the Motor Vehicle Development Program. If other members pay 10 percent or 3 percent, we should also be levied the same rate," Co said.

In a separate interview, Customs Commissioner Antonio Bernardo said the issue "is still being resolved."

"Our lawyers are still evaluating the matter. It is not yet resolved," he said, adding that the customs bureau was also seeking the Department of Trade and Industry's opinion on the matter.

The demand letter was issued by the BOC's collection district in Laguna after it learned that Ford Philippines was importing its Lynx, Ranger and Escape vehicles and declaring them as "component parts."

Ford Philippines has been paying a tax rate of "10 percent or less" for each of the 4,366 cars, the district office reported.

In the letter dated Dec. 27, customs collector Edward Baltazar said the figure was "misleading," as Ford Philippines had been importing completely built units.

"I felt the government is being shortchanged," Baltazar told the INQUIRER.

He said with the 10-percent tax, the auto assembler had been depriving the government of about P40,000 to over P100,000 in taxes per vehicle.

Baltazar, who assumed his post only last year, said he decided to classify the importations as "fully assembled vehicles," and that Ford Philippines should be imposed a tariff rate of 30 percent.

With this, he said, Ford's "duties and taxes, which should have been paid us, is in the amount of P707,279,215.89," covering the period Oct. 1, 1999 to Dec. 26, 2002.

"However, considering your underpayment, your customs duties and taxes deficiencies involving your importations is now at P488,557,862.71," Baltazar said.

He gave Ford Philippines 30 days to comply with the demand letter, threatening to hold the auto assembler's shipment should it fail to settle its debts. *With a report from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Cocktales

From page B0

locked up with Escaler.

More than the scandal value—Escaler is an older brother of Ernest Escaler of the Coutts Bank/Mark Jimenez fame—the suit has attracted the attention of the legal community since it is the first known case of an estranged lover suing her ex-roommate over co-ownership of property under the ambit of the New Family Code.

Bobby's new baby

POLO playing playboy Albert "Bobby" Aguirre will have the first crack in fondling yet another sweet young thing soon.

Seriously now, Bobby's younger sister, Nanette, whose property want Bobby foreclosed, is in the family way.

Nanette found out about her delicate condition only after staging a sit-in in Bobby's office last week in protest over Bobby's—how will we diplomatically put it?—financial reallocation of the multibillion-peso empire left by their late father.

Nanette's American husband, Cris Koruga, who is as jolted by the unexpected blessing as his wife, has promised in a moment of exuberance to name the child Alberto or Alberta if brother Bobby leaves them alone in peace.

Should Bobby decline the naming honors, he may still pick up the name from his female support group, if the child turns out to be a girl, which means Andrea, Girlie, Lorna, Rory, Virgie, Rachel, or Laida.

Good cars, stalled sales II

AB COMMUNICATIONS president Tom Banguis Jr. said the reported disagreement his agency had with the new Taiwanese principals of Nissan Motors (Cocktales, Jan. 31, 2003) has been settled since November.

Banguis declined to discuss the details of the case, but according to the grapevine, the advertising executive withdrew his complaint after Nissan agreed to provide ABCom P10 million worth of additional billings for the Cefiro account.

Incidentally, the ex-marketing chief of Nissan was Tonette Lee, not Elizabeth Lee of Universal Motors as reported Friday.

Heard through the grapevine

JERONIMO Kilayko and Lorenzo Tan are no longer with UCPB (Tan is now president of Philippine National Bank) but their foreclosure dispute with contractor Eulalio Ganzon continues to hound them.

The two bankers and other UCPB officers are to be arraigned this morning at the Makati Municipal Trial Court for estafa and other deceits as a result of the complaint filed by Ganzon.

The bankers maintain that Ganzon is hitting back at them for having foreclosed on the Ganzon-built condo-hotel at the corner of Buendia and Taft.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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CLUB FILIPINO	150,000.00	-
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MANILA GOLF CLUB (Ind)		10,400,000.00
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MANILA POLO CLUB	2,500,000.00	-
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Camp John Hay	240,000	Pls. Call
Capitol Hills Golf & CC A/B*	110,000	95,000
Canyon Woods	180,000	Pls. Call
Canlubang Golf	400,000	-
Calatagan Golf Club	80,000	60,000
Celebrity Sports Club	200,000	150,000
Club Filipino	170,000	150,000
Eagleridge "A"/"B"/"C"**	260,000/500,000*	220,000*
Eastridge "B"	150,000	-
Evercrest	100,000	-
Fontana D/C/A**	70,000/140,000*/230,000**	-
Forest Hills "A"/"C"	200,000/250,000*	-
Manila Golf Ind./Corp.*	12,600,000*	Pls. Call*
Manila Polo	2,600,000	2,400,000
Makati Sports Club A/B*	260,000	220,000
Manila Yacht Club	610,000	-
Manila Southwoods A/B*	550,000/720,000*	450,000
Metropolitan Club	100,000	80,000
Mimosa Golf Ind./Corp.*	140,000	100,000/250,000*
Mt. Malarayat Ind./Corp.*	350,000/450,000*	300,000
Orchard Golf A/B*	100,000/250,000*	Pls. Call
Phil. Columbian	65,000	Pls. Call
Puerto Azul "A"/"B"	100,000/150,000*	-
Punta Fuego	500,000	400,000
Quezon City Sports Club "A"	220,000	180,000
Riviera Golf "A"/"C"*	130,000/180,000*	-
Riviera Golf "B"	-	130,000
Royale Tagaytay A/C*	80,000/Pls. Call*	-
Rockwell Leisure Club	350,000	Pls. Call
Sherwoods "A"/"B"/"C"**	55,000/Pls. Call*	65,000/75,000
Sta. Elena Golf "A"/"B"	1,450,000	Pls. Call
Subic Bay Yacht Club "Corp"	290,000	-
Subic Golf	145,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	360,000	330,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	Pls. Call	800,000
Tagaytay Midlands	780,000	-
Valley Golf & CC	330,000	250,000
Valle Verde (Indiv.)	160,000	140,000
Wack Wack Golf	Pls. Call	Pls. Call

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Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	-	1,550,000
Baguio Country Club	610,000	650,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	70,000
Calatagan Golf Club "B"	-	80,000
Camp John Hay	220,000	240,000
Canlubang	-	500,000
Canyonwoods	-	180,000
Capitol Hills	90,000	110,000
Celebrity Sports Club	145,000	185,000
Club Filipino	110,000	150,000
Evercrest "A"	-	80,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	200,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	250,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	250,000	275,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	10,500,000	12,800,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	10,300,000	11,000,000
Manila Polo	2,400,000	2,650,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	500,000	550,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	600,000	730,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	630,000
Metropolitan Club "A"	90,000	130,000
Metropolitan Club "B"	100,000	130,000
Mimosa (Individual)	100,000	120,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	325,000
Montemar (Individual)	20,000	35,000
Mt. Malarayat (Individual)	-	300,000
Mt. Malarayat (Corporate)	-	450,000
Puerto Azul	-	100,000
Punta Fuego	400,000	540,000
Quezon City Sports Club	200,000	220,000
Rockwell	350,000	430,000
Royale Tagaytay "A"	60,000	70,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	90,000
Sherwood Hills "B"	-	180,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	180,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,300,000	1,550,000
Sta. Elena "B"		1,650,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	-	280,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	170,000
Tagaytay Country Club	320,000	350,000
Tagaytay Highlands	800,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	700,000	780,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	130,000	150,000
Valley Golf	200,000	300,000
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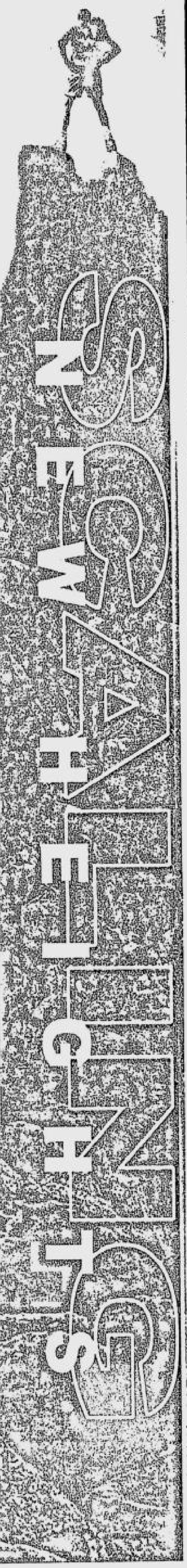


CII AND TOSHIBA: SCALING NEW HEIGHTS

Dynamism has been the cornerstone of the market growth and leadership of Concepcion Industries, Inc. (CII) through its four decades of corporate existence. Propelled by its belief of providing the Filipino consumers with quality products and services, the company created a corporate culture and structure geared to cater to the differing needs of a demanding clientele. Guided by the entrepreneurial zeal and work ethic of its founder, Jose Concepcion, Sr., CII staunchly adheres to the virtues of diligence, integrity, and conservatism that continue to fuel its strides to pre-eminence in the local air conditioning market. The other vital component of this success formula is CII's core business orientation coupled by a strong people empowerment. The third generation siblings of the Concepcion family who are now at the helm of CII draws inspiration from their forebears as they blaze new and challenging paths in pursuit of global competitiveness.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: BROADENING MARKETS

Product innovation and incisive market knowledge have nurtured CII's growth into one of the country's biggest and most profitable manufacturing enterprise that produces and sells the Condura brand of air conditioners to a highly receptive market. To provide a wider product selection for its customers, CII also markets kindred of brands that serve perticular market segments.

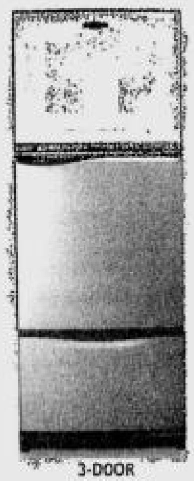
Confronted by economic deflation and fluctuating financial trends, CII met these challenges by remaining steadfast to their covenant to both the Filipino consumer and Philippine business community.

As the globalizing trend of the liberalization became apparent in the 1990's, CII crafted new directions designed to exploit the opportunities that this emergent phenomenon brings. Unfazed by the dire foreboding on the adverse impact of the globalization on local industries, the company took the initiative of aligning itself with this global order with optimism and enthusiasm. Re-tooling its corporate resources, CII emphasized a market-oriented product innovation, brand development and technology enhancement as the key factors for global competitiveness.

AN ALLIANCE FOR GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Consistent with its goal to be a global market player, the company has achieved another synergy with its alliance with Toshiba, one of the leading conglomerates in Japan, in marketing Toshiba refrigerators in the country. With Toshiba's cutting-edge multi-product technology and global presence and CII's local market leadership, the company aims to fulfill its commitment to provide the Filipino consumers with a wide selection of world-class products equipped with value-for-money features. CII views a market-driven brand development coupled by a vision of growth as avenues where local enterprises can harness the beneficial effects of globalization.

CII's partnership with Toshiba is a vital step in CII's goal to develop global competitiveness, a defining factor for its quest for product excellence and global leadership.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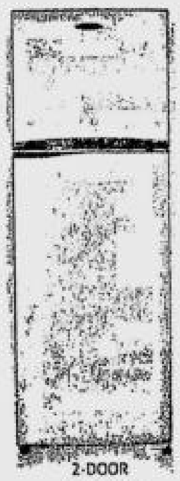
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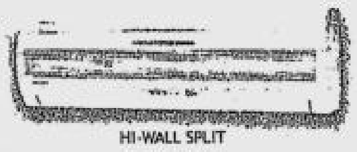
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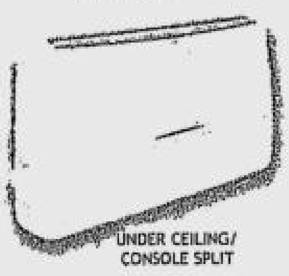
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Meralco may default on ₱5B in maturing loans

By Ronnel W. Domingo

MERALCO may default on loan payments says exec amounting to P5 billion if it does not get a rate hike by June, Meralco treasurer Rafael Andrada said.

In an interview, Andrada said the utility was already on technical default on its financial obligations.

"If we are not able to raise our rates within the first half of this year, it would mean payment default and, eventually, foreclosure," Andrada said.

He said Meralco's total obligations amounted to P26.5 billion or $500 million. Of the amount, P5 billion in principal and interest will fall due in the first semester.

He said the only contingency measure for this was a rate hike. Meralco, he added, has been seeking a rate hike since 1998.

Officials of the Energy Regulatory Commission earlier said they wanted to decide soon on Meralco's petition for the unbundling of rates, through which Meralco is seeking an average rate increase of P1.12 per kilowatt hour.

ERC acting Chair Leticia Ibay said the agency had intended to act on the case late last month but this did not push through in view of the consumer groups' petition for extension in the deadline for submission of documents related to the case.

Meralco officials said they expected the company to post a 2002 net income of about P500 million, representing a 65-percent decline from P1.4 billion in 2001. Company officials said this was due to the sluggish demand for power and its failure to increase rates.

In December, Meralco chair Manuel Lopez said Citibank NA and Bank of the Philippines were likely to be the utility's advisors on the restructuring of the firm's loans.

Loan restructuring is being planned amid a perceived weakened viability of Meralco due to a Supreme Court decision ordering a multi-billion-peso refund to customers.

Financing industry suffers ₱939-M third-quarter net loss

By Michelle V. Remo

THE FINANCING industry suffered a net loss of about P939 million in the third quarter of 2002, a reversal from a net income of about P424 million during the same period last year, documents from the Securities and Exchange Commission have shown.

The reversal in the industry's performance was partly attributed to Advent Capital and Finance Corp.'s net loss of about P1.5 billion and an increase in the industry's expenditures by about 4 percent, or P191 million, to P4.79 billion year-on-year.

The industry's gross income shrank from P5.026 million in the third quarter of 2001 to P3.85 million in the same period of 2002.

The financing industry's bank loans decreased by about 11 percent, or P1.419 billion, from P12.67 billion in the third quarter of 2001, resulting in a decrease in the industry's current liabilities by 7.53 percent or P1.84 billion to P22.6 billion from P24.46 billion.

PCI Leasing and Finance Corp. was the highest earner among the financing companies with a net income of about P187 million, followed by BPI Card Finance Corp. with P110.16 million and BPI Leasing Corp. with about P91 million.

Others that landed in the Top 10 financing companies with the highest net income are Orix Metro Leasing and Finance Corp with P49.8 million, LBP Leasing Corp. with P38.57 million, People's Credit and Finance Corp. with P36.7 million, First Malayan Leasing and Finance Corp with P23 million, UCPB Leasing and Finance with P20.3 million, BOT Lease and Finance Philippines Inc. with P18.7 million and Diamond Finance Corp. with P18.3 million.

The commission also announced that there are 30 newly registered financing companies granted certificates of authority.

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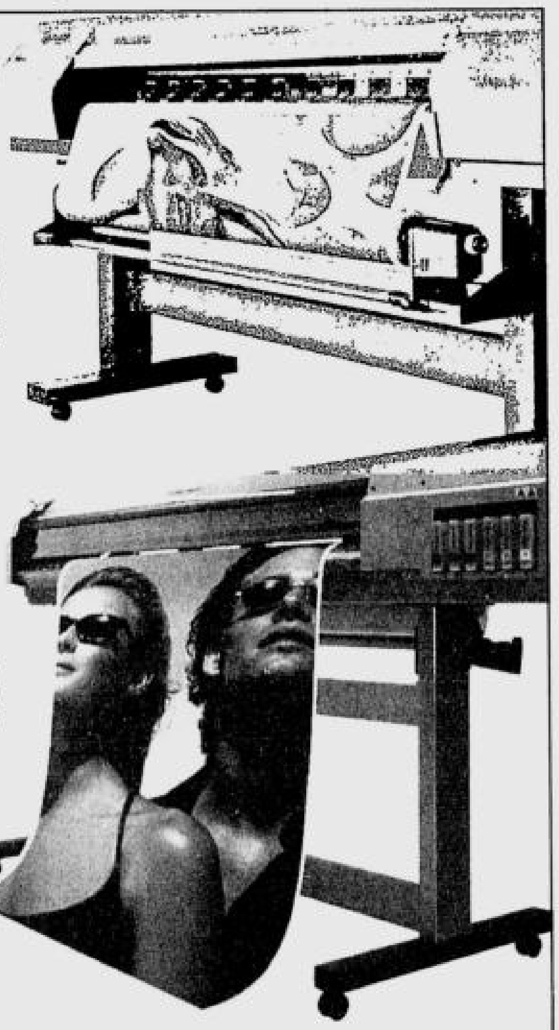

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Consumers boost spending in Dec.

WASHINGTON—US consumers racked up spending in December, shrugging off war worries to splash out on big-ticket items such as cars, the government said Friday.

People boosted spending by a seasonally adjusted 0.9 percent but incomes rose at a slower pace of 0.4 percent in the critical period for holiday sales, the Commerce Department said.

Spending on durable goods—things that are expected to last three years or more—shot up 6.1 percent, the sharpest rise in 14 months. Spending on other goods rose 0.2 percent.

Americans also picked up spending on services by 0.2 percent.

"Consumers did not roll over and play dead during the holiday shopping season," said Joel Naroff of Naroff Economic Advisors.

"Yes, they did buy every motor vehicle on the lot. But they also went into the stores and bought soft goods as well." Consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of US economic activity.

The news helped share prices rise, a day after investor sentiment had taken a knock from figures showing economic growth had slowed to just 0.4 percent in the last quarter of 2002.

Further brightening sentiment, a survey by the Chicago Purchasing Management Association showed industrial activity in the US Midwest region shot to a seven-month high in January.

The index of regional business activity, compiled from a survey of purchasing managers in the Chicago region, rose to 56.0 points in January from 51.7 in December.

In late morning trade, the Dow Jones industrial average of 30 top stocks rose 49.23 points or 0.62 percent to 7,994.36.

Naroff said the figures helped explain why Federal Reserve policymakers voted Wednesday to leave interest rates unchanged at a four-decade low.

"The Fed kept the status quo and one of the reasons had to be that consumers were still in there doing their part to keep the economy going," Naroff said. *AFP*

War fears cloud US economy

WASHINGTON—War jitters are clouding the US economic outlook, making it hard to discern the recovery's underlying state of health and difficult to forecast what will happen when the current uncertainty lifts, economists say.

"What happens this year is sort of anybody's guess," said Martin Baily of the Institute for International Economics.

Like many economists, Baily, who served as a top economic adviser to former President Bill Clinton, believes concerns over the potential damage a war could wreak on the economy has already made businesses reluctant to hire and spend.

But he also said the US recovery is being restrained by more than just concerns over a possible war with Iraq.

"We had an excess of (business) investment, we had a way overvalued stock market and we are still working our way through those things," he said.

In the view of economists at the Wall Street firm Goldman Sachs, war fears take a back seat to a hangover from the bursting of a stock market bubble.

"It simply isn't plausible that households or firms are retrenching because there could be a war halfway around the world, a war in which the United States is expected to prevail quite easily," Goldman Sachs economist Jan Hatzius wrote in a recent note to clients.

In a recent survey, the newsletter Blue Chip Economic Indicators found forecasters, on average, looking for growth of 2.8 percent this year, which would mark a slight pickup from last year's sluggish 2.4 percent.

In general, economists see a weak first half of the year followed by accelerating growth once war clouds pass. But there appears to be an unusually large range of forecasts, in part because of split views over what is holding the economy back.

In announcing its decision to hold interest rates steady at four-decade lows earlier this week, policymakers at the Federal Reserve gave the war-fears argument a nod. *Reuters*

Wall St. investors seen staying on sidelines

NEW YORK—The winds of war have been buffeting Wall Street, sending skittish investors to the sidelines, and the storm is only likely to intensify this week as the White House makes its last diplomatic push for Iraqi disarmament.

With US forces massing in the Middle East and the rhetoric from Washington heating up, the United States appears increasingly on the brink of war.

The suspense is killing stocks and has plunged key market gauges to their lowest levels in more than three months.

President George W. Bush has said Baghdad has just weeks left to avert war, and Wall Street will be tuned in for anything that might give clues to a timeline for a possible US attack on Iraq.

"Iraq will be the most important issue next week—period," said Hugh Johnson, chief investment officer at First Albany Asset Management. Ordinarily, investors' focus would be fixed on the outlook for the economy and corporate profits, but "(this) week is just not going to be an ordinary week."

While brewing geopolitical events will likely shove nearly everything else to the back burner, a flood of economic reports—particularly data on the manufacturing sector and the labor market—could help determine Wall Street's mood.

The Institute of Supply Management's closely watched gauge of the factory sector, set for release on Monday, and the US payrolls report on Friday will give investors some early glimpses of the state of the economy in January.

Evidence that the US economy is pulling out of its soggy patch has been spotty, at best, and the increasing possibility of war has whipped up fears growth could stumble as corporate America puts off investment decisions and stubbornly high oil prices bite into corporate profits.

The steady parade of corporate earnings will probably also fade into the background somewhat, but Wall Street will be tuned in for results and, more importantly, forecasts from technology bellwether Cisco Systems Inc. and No. 4 US long-distance telephone company Sprint Corp. *Reuters*

China fears oil price hike, weaker exports

BEIJING—An Iraq war could hit China's economy in the form of higher oil prices and weaker exports just as Beijing is counting on strong growth to soak up millions of laid off state workers and keep a lid on social unrest.

A US-led war on Iraq is likely to push up crude oil prices, raising transport and manufacturing costs for Asia's star economy, which imports about 500 million barrels a year, or one-third of its consumption.

A price spike that sent crude oil up to $40 a barrel could cost China several billion dollars and take the shine out of booming sectors like the automotive industry, analysts said.

For now the thinking is that a war, and any economic pain that it brought, would be swift.

"We will not see a prolonged war. It should be very short and if that's the case then we will see oil prices falling back towards $20 a barrel," Xin Xie, a Bank of America economist in Singapore said on Friday.

"Net impact for the year probably will be positive if everything goes as expected."

But, economists said, an unexpectedly long conflict would drag down the global economy further and hit demand for Chinese exports, which grew a year-on-year 21 percent in the first 11 months of 2002 and were a key part of eight percent economic growth.

"The indirect impact will come from a likely stagnation of the world economy caused by the war, which will in turn affect China's exports and the use of foreign investment," said Li Guobin, a senior economist at the State Information Center, a top government think-tank. *Reuters*

DaimlerChrysler reshuffles board

BERLIN—DaimlerChrysler announced a management shake-up Friday that gives the US-German carmaker a fresher face, but leaves only one American on the board of a company formed in what was billed as a merger of equals.

Three members of the management board, including former Chrysler executive Gary C. Valade, will step down at the end of the year. Only one of the three men, ages 59-60, is being replaced—with a 43-year-old German.

DaimlerChrysler said the shuffle, which cuts the board from 13 to 11 seats, leaves its top management "younger and more focused." But it also increases the dominance of German executives as the world's No. 5 carmaker faces a lawsuit in the United States over the 1998 deal that combined Chrysler and Daimler-Benz.

US billionaire Kirk Kerkorian, whose Tracinda Corp. held 14 percent of Chrysler's stock, claims shareholders were duped into approving the deal when executives from both companies portrayed it as a merger.

The suit claims that Daimler-Benz chair Juergen Schrempp—now DaimlerChrysler's boss—and other company officials misled shareholders to grease a foreign takeover and to cheat them out of their rightful acquisition fee. Kerkorian is seeking $13 billion in damages. *Reuters*

Air France pilots' strike disruptions 'limited'

PARIS—A strike by Air France pilots this week should cause only "limited" flight disruptions, the French carrier said Friday.

During the Sunday-through-Wednesday protest, about 85 percent of domestic and international flights should be running, the company said.

All passengers on long-haul flights to places such as North America and Asia will reach their destinations.

This is despite a few disruptions, the company said.

Almost all travelers on shorter flights within Europe will fly "without too much delay," the company said.

Three of Air France's six pilots unions are calling the strike for better pay.

The issue has caused tension since September, when all six unions banded together for a four-day strike that severely disrupted flights.

Initially, only two small unions were to participate in next week's protest.

Air France, however, said Friday that SNPL, the largest, had also joined.

"Management can only deplore this attitude, which chooses conflict rather than continued negotiations along with the other unions," the company said. *AP*

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Bush budget set to slide deeper into deficit

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush's budget for next year will provide a big boost in funding for homeland defense, the military and Medicare, setting the stage for record deficits and a fierce battle over tax and spending priorities before the 2004 election.

Responding to the nation's sense of insecurity since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, Bush's $2.2 trillion budget for fiscal 2004, set to be released on Monday, will devote more than $41 billion to beef up domestic defenses and $380 billion for the Pentagon, substantial increases over the current year, according to administration officials.

Adding to a tide of grim fiscal news, Bush is expected to forecast budget deficits totaling nearly $300 billion in fiscal years 2003 and 2004, possibly surpassing a 1992 record of $290 billion even before the cost of a possible war with Iraq is factored in.

When viewed in proportion to the size of the economy, the projected deficits would still remain well below the record level of 6 percent of gross domestic product during the Reagan administration in 1983.

"This is nowhere near a record. In fact, a deficit of this size as a share of the economy is better than 12 of the last 20 years," said Trent Duffy, a spokesperson for the White House Office of Management and Budget.

But at nearly triple the $109 billion shortfall for 2003 forecast by the White House in July, the new estimates underscore a dramatic deterioration in the nation's fiscal picture since a record surplus in 2000. As recently as 2001, the government was forecasting 10-year budget surpluses of $5.6 trillion.

Besides defense at home and abroad, Bush's top budget priorities in fiscal 2004 will include providing prescription drug benefits to seniors and bolstering the Securities and Exchange Commission to combat a wave of corporate scandals.

To revive the beleaguered economy, Bush is proposing a new round of tax cuts, expected to cost $670 billion over 10 years, though its prospects for passage are uncertain due to opposition from Democrats and some Republicans worried about ballooning deficits.

White House officials say growth in the rest of government would be kept down to 3 percent to 4 percent, though Democrats on the House Appropriations Committee said non-defense, non-homeland security programs would be squeezed.

Republicans defended the need to restrain spending.

"We've got huge needs in national defense and homeland security that are driving a lot of the spending," said House Budget Committee chair Jim Nussle, an Iowa Republican. "The rest of the priorities need to be left for another day."

But big deficits could pose political problems for Bush and his Republican allies.

Bush's budget director, Mitch Daniels, has acknowledged that the federal government would post deficits for the "foreseeable future." Though he said the deficits would begin to shrink starting in fiscal 2005, he expects the government to run a cumulative budget shortfall over the next five years.

With an eye on the 2004 presidential election, Democrats have accused Bush of abandoning budget discipline to push through huge tax cuts that would mostly benefit the rich.

White House officials insist that the projected deficits, while unfortunate, are manageable, noting that they would be about half the size of shortfalls recorded in the 1980s as a proportion of the economy.

They blamed the recession, the Sept. 11 attacks and the war on terrorism for ballooning deficits, and predicted that a new round of tax cuts would boost economic growth and eventually lead the nation back to surpluses. *Reuters*

McDonald's stock hits 8-year low on downgrade

OAK BROOK, Illinois—McDonald's Corp.'s stock sank to an eight-year low Friday after a leading credit agency cut its debt ratings, saying its efforts to turn around its sagging US business won't pay off before 2004.

Fitch Ratings cited McDonald's "weakened operating performance" and increased competition from other low-cost eateries in downgrading its debt by one notch and revising its overall rating outlook to negative from stable.

McDonald's shares fell 22 cents, or 1.5 percent, to close at $14.24 on the New York Stock Exchange—their lowest closing price since December 1994—after sinking as low as $13.91.

New York-based Fitch said it acted because "the measures being taken by McDonald's to improve its US business results, such as store remodels, quality improvement and the Dollar Menu, will take 12 to 18 months to have an impact on operating performance."

It also indicated that sluggishness in the fast-food industry in the United States and soft global economies will continue to hamper sales.

On the bright side, it noted that McDonald's continues as the fast-food industry leader worldwide and boasts "exceptional brand awareness, extensive real estate holdings and broad geographic diversity."

The downgrade came eight days after the company posted a first-ever loss of $344 million in the fourth quarter, acknowledging complications from its fast expansion pace and complaints about speed and food quality in its US restaurants.

The world's leading hamburger chain announced plans to close 719 of its 31,000 restaurants worldwide, and new CEO Jim Cantalupo has pledged other changes in the weeks and months ahead. *AP*

A FATHER and daughter grab a quick snack at an American fast-food restaurant, Jan. 29 in Beijing, decorated with traditional Chinese paper-cutting for the Year of the Goat which begins with the arrival of the lunar new year on Feb. 01. Consumers in China have the most optimistic economic outlook in the Asia-Pacific region, according to a survey released today, in which consumers were asked about the outlook for employment, economy, regular income, the stock market and quality of life.

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WorldCom plans to cut jobs, pare operating costs by 4%

PHILADELPHIA—WorldCom Inc. is expected to unveil as early as Monday a cost-cutting plan that will cut 3,000 to 6,000 jobs, or 5 to 10 percent of its work force, as it tries to pare 4 percent of its operating costs, sources familiar with the situation said on Friday.

Details of the plan will be sorted over the weekend, with a final plan due to WorldCom chair Michael Capellas on Monday, one source said.

WorldCom, which filed for the world's largest bankruptcy in July amid a $9 billion accounting scandal, declined to comment. Earlier this month, the Clinton, Mississippi-based company said it would release its cost-cutting plan around Feb. 1, and release its three-year business plan by March 1.

The bankrupt long-distance telephone and data services company has said it wants to pare 3 percent of its general sales and administrative expenses, and 4 percent of its operating costs.

The bulk of the cost-savings will be done by eliminating unprofitable products, cutting administrative and sales costs, and improving productivity, rather than through job cuts, sources said.

Still, WorldCom's new chair Michael Capellas warned employees last month that "there's no way you achieve these numbers without some force reduction." The layoffs, however, will be much smaller than the 15,000 jobs, or 25 percent of the work force, that some analysts had expected. *Reuters*

Honeywell posts loss on charges

BOSTON—Diversified manufacturer Honeywell International Ltd. on Friday reported a fourth-quarter net loss after booking nearly $2 billion of charges for settling asbestos lawsuits, asset write-downs and plant closures.

Honeywell also warned that its earnings this year would fall short of the most optimistic Wall Street forecasts. It said revenue would be little changed from 2002 as its aerospace business suffers from the downturn in the airline industry.

Honeywell shares were up 3.5 percent in midday trade. The stock was bolstered by a deal announced on Thursday that would shield the company from asbestos claims related to its Bendix brakes business, said Jeff Graff, an analyst at Victory Capital Management.

During the past few years, restructuring and asbestos claims have waylaid Honeywell profits. In the last two years alone it has recorded $5.85 billion in pre-tax charges.

Paul Nisbet, an analyst at JSA Research Inc., said charges and write-offs have sounded a somber note. "It's not a real pretty picture from what used to be a very high-margin, high-multiple stock," said the analyst, who has a "hold" rating on Honeywell shares.

Honeywell, which makes a variety of products from airplane parts to thermostats to antifreeze, posted a fourth-quarter net loss of $1.46 billion, or $1.78 a share, compared with a profit of $118 million, or 14 cents a share, in the year-earlier quarter. Revenue was little changed at $5.9 billion.

The Morris Township, New Jersey-based company said it expects to earn $1.60 to $1.70 a share in 2003, after pension fund expenses that will reduce earnings by 36 cents a share. Reuters

JAPANESE businessmen inspect Honda Motor Co.'s popular vehicle Accord at Honda headquarters showroom in Tokyo Friday, Jan. 31. Japan's No. 2 automaker posted a 40 percent surge in profits during the latest quarter on solid sales in North America and forecast Friday, Jan. 31 a record year of profits for the second year in a row. For the October-December period, Honda recorded a profit of 115 billion yen ($966 million), up from 82 billion yen the same period a year ago. Sales climbed 13 percent to 1.989 trillion yen ($16.7 billion) from 1.756 trillion yen.

AP

Narrower spacing on radio band opposed

THE KAPISANAN ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) opposed the proposal to reduce the spacing in the FM band between radio stations because this would harm the existing radio broadcast service and would impede the adoption of digital broadcasting technology. This concern was aired by the KBP during a hearing of the Committee on Transportation and Communications and the Committee on Legislative Franchises in Congress recently.

The KBP, led by its president Jose Antonio K. Veloso, said narrowing the spacing between radio stations would threaten the economic viability of the radio industry, result in poor signal quality, and prevent existing radio stations to convert to digital broadcasting.

The Committees on Transportation and Communication, chaired by Rep. Jacinto V. Paras, and Legislative Franchises chaired by Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri, are interested in reducing the spacing between FM stations to allow the grantees of new franchises from Congress to operate radio stations in what is considered already congested broadcast areas such as Metro Manila—where there are already more than 50 radio stations.

The justification made for narrower spacing between radio stations was supposedly to introduce digital broadcasting in the country. Among the proponents of the proposal is Media One, a new grantee of a Congressional franchise which has applied for a frequency in Metro Manila.

However, it turned out during the hearing that the application of Media One for a new station was only for analogue broadcast and not digital.

The KBP informed the two committees during the hearing that it was only last October that the United States had adopted a technology that would allow existing broadcasters to migrate to digital broadcasting using their existing frequencies. The technology, referred to as in-band-on-channel, or Iboc, is designed for the transition to full digital broadcasting. Digital broadcasting is supposed to give listeners CD-like quality reception and allow stations to deliver auxiliary services.

The Iboc technology will enable present radio broadcasters to effect a seamless migration to digital broadcasting using their existing infrastructure. The system will enable the present receivers to continue receiving the analogue signal, while Iboc receivers will receive the CD-quality digital signal. However, the KBP said, transition technology still requires the maintenance of the current 800 megahertz separation and cannot be implemented in the Philippines if the present spacing between radio stations is narrowed down.

The KBP asked the two committees to consider not only the interests of new franchise grantees who want to enter into the business, but also the welfare of the existing operators and the listening public.

FIVE CALLER IDS DONATED TO CPD

PLDT and its authorized Caller ID distributor Centennial Technologies, recently donated five Caller ID adjunct units to Central Police District. This is in response to the police group's clamor for immediate installation of caller identification devices on all telephones at Metro Manila police stations for the prevention of prank calls, especially phony bomb threats. Photo shows Centennial Technologies president Joselito Saez, 2nd from left, turning over one of the units to Philippine National Police District Intelligence Unit-chief inspector Rodolfo M. Jaraza. Others in photo are, from left: Centennial Technologies account management group head Marjorie Domingo, PLDT local services-features senior product manager Ma. Cecilia Marino, and PLDT local services-features assistant product manager Mary Grace Miranda. Caller ID inquiries / orders can be coursed through Centennial Technologies at tel. no. 896-7888.

GMA GRACES TOYM AWARDING

The Outstanding Young Men, on its 44th year is the longest running and most prestigious project of the Philippine Jaycees. 2002 TOYM winners were recently awarded at the Malacañang composed of: Eduardo Calma, architecture; Eva Cutiongco, genetic medicine; Gabriel Romero, plant breeding, genetics and molecular biology; Antonio Maigue, music; Rafe Totengco, fashion design; GMA; Luis Villafuerte, entrepreneurship; Florencio Mongoso, government and public service; Raquel Fortun, forensic pathology; Theodore Te, human rights/legal aid; Maria Angelita Ressa, international broadcast journalism. In photo with GMA are the national officers of the Philippine Jaycees, from left: Jocelle Pascual, TOYM national chair; Mabel Villarica-Mamba, national president; Rafael Boydee Dizon, JCI vice president, Reggie Yu, national secretary general.

Nurturing the child in school

WE adults, carry this bagful of good intentions of molding a child into what we think he should become, forgetting that this growing human being needs to be understood, respected and nurtured as he is. And thus, we fall into the trap of mechanically filling their heads with information, hurriedly teaching them skills and unconsciously goading them to adopt to the kind of push button mentality that the world seems to demand.

We are already reaping the results of our folly. Our children are getting ill – childhood stress, hyperactivity, learning difficulties, disabilities etc. When will it finally dawn on us that these children have certain basic needs that we have to nurture?

They need care and attention. They need meaningful encounters with the good, the true and the beautiful in the world. They need to listen, to move and to develop their own imagination. They need to play. They need time for encounters that embrace them and touch their souls. They need boundaries too, for them to learn what is moral and not. They need time to unfold the members of their being.

An educational curriculum to be responsive to this unfolding human being needs to primarily address the process of preparing the child in a highly individual way, to become creative and imaginative. It requires flexible systems. The teaching method and strategy should be "warmed through" with feelings, and not reduced to the merely cold, intellectually conceived instructions.

Such is Waldorf Education – it maintains the essentially human element in whatever subject is being taught. It appropriately addressed the needs of the child at every stage of development. Exercising and enlivening the soul capacities of thinking, feeling and willing, is more important than just the mere passing on of information. Each phase of a child's development is understood and reflected in the curriculum.

Equally important is that, it likewise provides a parallel path for teachers to grow in her own spiritual development at the same time as the child that she has committed herself to nurture. After all, Rudolf Steiner, the one who developed this educational approach, believed that, in the final analysis the most important aspect in educational process is what passes from soul to soul in the teacher pupil encounter.

Find out more about Waldorf education. Attend the Manila Waldorf School orientation on Feb. 8, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. The Manila Waldorf School is located at #2 Vinzon St. corner J. Abad Santos, Heroes Hills, QC. For inquiries, please contact the following: Susan Quimpo, 371-6296 (after 8 p.m.); Cherry Mapa, 897-6920 (7 p.m. to 9 p.m.); Susan Calalay-Yñiguez, 373-4807 or 412-0224 (Monday to Saturday, 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.); Sharon Arriola, 433-2011 (Wednesday, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. / and Saturday to Sunday, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.); George Chiu, 893-2966 (10 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

'MAN OF LA MANCHA' AWARD

The Citizens Legal Aid Society of the Philippines (Clasp) recently honored its nine founding members with the 'Man of La Mancha' award in grateful recognition of their pioneering work in establishing the first non-stock, non-profit legal aid organization in the country in 1967. Of the nine, only three are still alive today. They are: former Vice President Salvador H. Laurel (second from left), retired Supreme Court Justice Jose Y. Feria (third from left) and Ambassador Enrique P. Syquia (fourth from left). Besides Syquia is lawyer Gizela Madrigal-Gonzalez, daughter of the late lawyer Gonzalo W. Gonzalez, who received the award on behalf of her father. Flanking the awardees are House Deputy Speaker Raul M. Gonzalez (extreme left), Clasp chair, and former Comelec chair Harriet O. Demetriou (extreme right), Clasp president. The deceased Clasp founders who were similarly honored are: lawyers Crispin D. Baizas, Juan Luces Luna, Juan T. David, Alberto M. Jamir and J. Antonio Araneta.

MINOLA WINS CONSUMERS CHOICE AWARDS

Minola Premium Edible Oil was the 19th Year-Ender National Consumers Awards Choice for the 'Top Cooking Oil Brand of the Year' conferred by the National Consumers Affairs Foundation (NCAF) and the Parangal Ng Bayan Foundation. This recognition was the result of the year-long random consumer survey and research conducted by the NCAF Awards Committee which includes telephone polls in leading and small product outlets. Photo shows Ramon Macasinag (middle) marketing manager of the San Pablo Manufacturing Corporation 9SPMC, accepting the award for Minola in an awarding ceremony rites held recently at the AFP Theater in Camp Aguinaldo QC, flanked by NCAF officials headed by (from left): project chair Jonathan Navea, Madam Lolita Escobar-Marpuri, Governor Justo M. Ortiza and Celia A. Umali.

BITS & Clips

Life in the Spirit seminar

THE BUKLOD ng Pag-Ibig Catholic Charismatic Community, under the spiritual direction of Bishop Federico O. Escaler SJ, is pleased to announce that it will be holding Catholic Life in the Spirit Seminar (CLSS) No. 48 on Feb. 22 and 23 at the PRRM Building, corner Mother Ignacia and Dr. Lazcano Streets, Quezon City. The theme for this seminar is "Remain in me and you will bear much fruit". Prior to the CLSS proper, an orientation was held on Feb. 1 at the BNP Healing Center at 3 Don Ramon Street, Talayan Village, Quezon City. For further inquiries, interested parties can call the BNP Center at 732-3421.

Trinity College turns 40

TRINITY College of Quezon City celebrates its Ruby Anniversary from Feb. 3 to 7 with the theme "Paglingap 2003: Preparing Life Through God-inspired Service." Opening the festivities is a thanksgiving mass on Feb. 3 at the Cathedral of St. John and St. Mary. A motorcade featuring the different community services offered by the College shall pass E. Rodriguez Sr. Boulevard and New Manila. This will be followed by opening of the booths, rides and exhibits with Mayor Sonny Belmonte, Rep. Nanette Daza and alumna Maricel Soriano cutting the ceremonial ribbon. A fund-raising campaign for outreach and scholarship programs via a dinner for a cause will be held at the Rembrandt Hotel on Feb. 5 at 6 p.m. There, 63 administrators, faculty and staff shall receive their service awards. Other exciting activities are lined up. A fireworks display is on Feb. 5. On Feb. 8, 6 p.m., a grand alumni homecoming for the high school will be hosted by Batch '78.

DLSU-Manila Job Expo 2003

DE LA Salle University-Manila's Office of Career Services (OCS) will hold a Job Expo from Feb. 4 to 7 at the ground floor of the Yuchengco building. The Job Expo is a semi-annual event that provides a venue for Lasallian job hunters and prospective employers to get together. About 80 local and multinational companies from different industries such as banking, consulting, and manufacturing will be participating. In addition, two participants from the academe—Xavier School and Miriam College—will be looking for educators. Several companies will hold company talks during the week. Major sponsors of the Job Expo are Procter & Gamble, Unilever Philippines, Aboitiz Transport Group Inc., GlaxoSmithKline, Accenture and Union Bank of the Philippines.

A new perspective on affordable housing

IT is a dream of every Filipino family to have a house and a lot they can call their own. However, the exorbitant cost of city living frustrates this dream for many.

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The building will be equipped with an emergency power generator for the common areas, a visitor's lounge, administration office and with provision for individual mail boxes, cable TV, individual electric meter and water submeter, 24-hour association security to ensure comfort and security to residents.

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PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION/RE-BIDDING

Sealed proposals for the sale of scrap items listed below will be received at the Office of the PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, PMO-PULUPANDAN, 3rd Floor, Prudentialife Building, Luzuriaga-San Juan Streets, Bacolod City, not later than **FEBRUARY 13, 2003, at 10:00 o'clock in the morning** at which date, time and place said proposal will be opened in the presence of the bidders.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ITEMS/PROPERTY	Qty/Um	Min. Bid
One (1) Lot Steel Trusses (main with members, Steel Columns, Steel Columns (composite), Steel Columns (inside buttress), Purlins (z-type), Ga 24 GI Roofing, Steel Full Truss, Beams and Girders, Girts, Bracing/ Sagrods, Basketed/Re-Inforced Square Bars (12m x 43m), Basketed Re-Inforced Square Bars (9m x 50m x 50m), Square Bars, Bollard, Mooring Bitts, Purlins assorted sizes	1 Lot	P2,840,095.05

The abovementioned items are available for inspection at the Office of the Philippine Ports Authority at Pulupandan, Negros Occidental. Contact person is Port Manager NECITAS G. LAYOLA, JR., telephone number (034) 435-0415.

Issuance of Bid Proposals, Rules and Regulations of the bidding process may be secured by the interested bidders on **February 3-6, 2003** from the Senior Supply Officer of the abovementioned office upon payment of TWO HUNDRED PESOS (Php 200.00) which is non-refundable.

All prospective bidders are invited to see the actual condition of the items considering that the sale shall be on "As-Is-Where-Is" "Cash and Carry" basis. The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality found therein or accept the bid proposal which in its judgement is most advantageous to the government. The Authority's decision on the matter shall be final and binding.

Authority to dispose through public bidding of the above described items is embodied in the General Manager's Memoranda dated August 26, 2000 and March 12, 2002.

16 January 2003, Cebu City, Philippines

(Sgd.) MANUEL T. GORME
Port District Manager, PDO-Visayas
Chairman, Disposal Committee

(PDI – Feb. 1 & 3, 2003)

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INQUIRER TRIVIA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Nitty-gritty

Q. Why do we say *nitty-gritty* to mean 'the actual, basic facts, elements, or issues?'

A. The usual phrase is *get down to the nitty-gritty*, meaning 'to discuss essential matters,' which first became popular in the US in the 1960s. No one is certain as to the exact origin of the slangy, rhyming expression, but the top theory is that *nitty-gritty* refers to the unclean scalp of a person living in squalor. A layer of *grit* (dirt) and a colony of *nits* (lice) tend to build up under the hair in such conditions, so if someone get down to the *nitty-gritty*, he was originally, perhaps, scratching at his scalp with his nails. From that image came the more general idea of probing beneath external appearances to reach the underlying problem.

Ooops! Monkeys normally search each other's hair or fur not because they are looking for parasites. Although this so-called grooming behavior may produce an occasional insect treat, the monkeys are actually looking for much desired bits of salt that have exuded through the pores of the skin and have dried out under the hair.

Pinoy First. The first talking Tagalog movie was *Punyal na Ginto* (Golden Dagger), produced in 1933 and based on the popular novel by Antonio Sempio. It was also the first Filipino film with sound in its entirety. Directed by cinema pioneer Jose Nepomuceno, *Punyal na Ginto* starred Alma Bella, Carlos Padilla, Tina del Rosario, and Paco Zamora.

WORD WATCH

Riposte (ri powst') : a sharp, swift retort; from a swift thrust in fencing made after parrying an opponent's lunge.

PDI – February 3, 2003

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*Has joined her husband **CRISPIN SR.** (†) and peacefully rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord on February 1, 2003 at the age of 83.*

Her loving children, **Sonny & Vicky, Jim & Rosa, Mina & Pat, Jojo & Laurin, Irma & Lorentz, Olan & Remy, Ghie & Espie;**

Her grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request for prayers for her eternal happiness.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz in Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 9, 2003 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque, immediately after the requiem 1 p.m. Mass.

"I have fought a good fight,
I have finished the race,
I have kept the faith.
From now on a merited crown awaits me..."
2 Timothy 4:7-8

ATTY. EDGAR B. UYTIEPO

who was called Home by Our Heavenly Father on January 31, 2003

His loving wife **Baby**; daughters **Olive**, **Cybill** and **Addy**; mother, **Rosing**; brothers and sisters; in-laws; relatives and friends are assured by the Word of God that he is now reunited with Our Father.

His body lies in state at Rolling Hills Memorial Chapels (Chapel of Faith II), Mandalagan, Bacolod City.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 8, 2003 at Rolling Hills Memorial Park, Bacolod City, after the 2:00 p.m. Holy Mass.

Our Dearly Beloved

ATTY. AGUSTIN J. GUILLERMO

L.L.B.-U.P. (Member) Alpha Phi Beta
Born: February 29, 1940
Peacefully joined his Creator on February 01, 2003

Wife **ANGELINA**; son **JOEY**;
his brother **DR. MARIANO & DR. SOFIA GUILLERMO**;
sisters **MARIA SAPAD; SOLEDAD** and **ARCE**;
DOLORES; sister-in-law **LUCENA**.

His grandchildren, nieces, nephews, relatives and friends request for the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Nacional, Chapel 3-B, Araneta Q.C. up to February 5, 2003.
Interment will be on Sunday, February 9, 2003 at the Luna, Isabela Cemetery after a.m. Mass.

For the needs of your departed Loved Ones, the following establishments can help you.

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Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City. Tels. 231-0721, 231-3192
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WELINGTON FUNERAL SERVICES
1511 Gen. Luna St., Paco, Manila. Tels. 522-8846, 522-9438, 400-6394

Mercedes Bautista vda. Zandueta

peacefully joined our Lord and her husband, Sixto B. Zandueta on Jan. 31, 2003

The family, led by her children **Frank** and **Margie** request the readers to remember her in their prayers.

Her body lies in state at Capilla del Señor in Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park. Interment is on February 5, 2003 after the 9:30 a.m. Mass.

"Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love Him."
I Corinthians 2:9

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SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
Cagayan de Oro Branch
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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) Cagayan de Oro Branch** is inviting bidders to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for a two (2) year contract for any or all of the following:

	Approved Budget for the Contract
A. SECURITY SERVICES FOR:	
Cagayan de Oro, Valencia, Camiguin, Butuan, San Francisco, Gingoog, Surigao, Tandag, Iligan, Ozamis & Oroquieta Offices and SSS Properties at Nasipit, Agusan de Norte	**P 17,174,746.56**
B. JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR:	
Cagayan de Oro, Valencia, Camiguin, Butuan, San Francisco, Gingoog, Surigao, Tandag, Iligan, Ozamis & Oroquieta Offices	**P 5,189,203.00**

Application for eligibility is open to all security/janitorial agencies with at least 5 years experience, and with valid license or business permit to undertake the services described herein.

Eligibility Forms will be available to interested bidders from **January 28 to February 10, 2003** at the BAC - Cluster Secretariat, 2nd Floor SSS Building, Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City.

Submission of Eligibility Requirements for Security and Janitorial services shall be on **February 26, 2003 and February 27, 2003, respectively at 9:00 AM** for screening on a pass/fail criteria at the BAC - Cluster Secretariat, Conference Room 2nd Floor, SSS Building, Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City.

The Terms of Reference, Bid Proposal Form, Draft of the Proposed Contract will be distributed to eligible bidders from **March 3 to 7, 2003** upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P 3,000.00 for security services and P 1,000.00 for janitorial services.

All eligible bidders issued with bid documents are required to attend the Pre-Bid Conference on **March 14, 2003 at 9:00 AM for security and 2:00 PM for janitorial services** at the Conference Room, 2nd Floor, SSS Building, Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City.

Submission of duly accomplished Bid Proposals for Security and Janitorial Services shall be on or before **April 21, 2003 at 8:30 AM and 1:30 PM, respectively.** Opening of the Bids shall be on **April 21, 2003 at 9:00 AM for Security Services and 2:00 PM forJanitorial Services** at the Conference Room, 2nd Floor, SSS Building, Carmen, Cagayan de Oro City in the presence of COA Auditor, Internal Auditor and participating bidders or their authorized representatives.

All Bids shall be accompanied by Bid Security (Bid Bond) in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check equivalent to 1% of the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) or 2½ % of the ABC in the form of a Surety Bond (GSIS only).

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason; waive any formality or defects and to make an award to the proposal most advantageous to the System. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for whatsoever losses that the bidders may incur in the prepration of their bids nor guarantees that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **JOSEFINA M. OLAN**
Chairman, Local Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI--Feb. 3, 2003)

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY
PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Sealed proposals for the sale of scrap items will be received at the Office of the PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, PMO-ILOILO, Baseport, Loboc, Lapuz, Iloilo City, **not later than February 12, 2003, at 2:30 in the afternoon**, at which date, time and place said proposal will be opened in the presence of the bidders.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ITEMS/PROPERTY

ITEMS/DESCRIPTION	QTY/UM	Min. Bid
Scrap Iron (Various sizes) (I-Beam, C-Channel, L-Bar, Flat Bar, MS Plate, Plain Round Bar, Hollow Steel Pile Hammer, BI Pipe, Total Weight of Scrap Iron – 66,410.58 kgs)	1 Lot	P219,154.92

The above-mentioned items are available for inspection at the Office of the Philippine Ports Authority at the Port Management Office-Iloilo, Iloilo City. Contact person is Port Manager ATTY. CHRISTIAN V. SANTILLAN, telephone numbers (033) 337-6945 and 337-7791.

Issuance of Bid Proposals, Rules and Regulations of the bidding process may be secured by the interested bidders on February 3-6, 2003 from the Senior Supply Officer of the above-mentioned office upon payment of TWO HUNDRED PESOS (Php 200.00) which is non-refundable.

All prospective bidders are invited to see the actual condition of the items considering that the sale shall be on "As-Is-Where-Is", "Cash and Carry" basis. The Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formality found therein or accept the bid proposal which in its judgement is most advantageous to the government. The Authority's decision on the matter shall be final and binding.

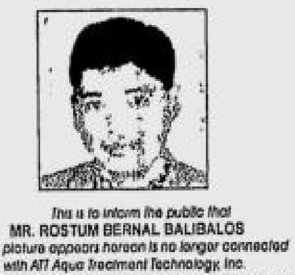
Authority to disposal through public bidding of the above-described items is embodied in the General Manager's Memoranda dated December 16, 2002.

16 January 2003, Cebu City, Philippines

(Sgd.) **MANUEL T. GORME**
Port District Manager
Chairman, Disposal Committee

(PDI – Feb. 1 & 3, 2003)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



This is to inform the public that
MR. ROSTUM BERNAL BALIBALOS
whose picture appears hereon is no longer connected with ATI Aqua Treatment Technology, Inc. effective December 3, 2002. Any transaction made or entered into by the aforesaid person for and in behalf of the said company on or after such date will not be honored.

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INVITATION FOR ACCREDITATION AND INTENT TO BID FOR LBRDC PROJECTS

All contractors, registered with and classified as **"SMALL"** and **"MEDIUM"** by Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) for Building and Industrial Plant, preferably with experience in the construction of renovation of bank buildings or project of identical scope and technology, are invited to submit company profile for short listing and accreditation. Interested contractors may submit their company profile at the following address:

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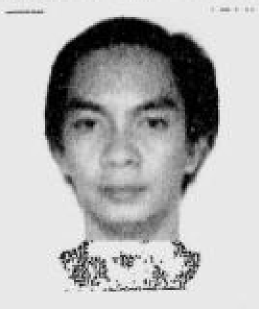
1598 M. H. Del Pilar St., cor. Quintos St.
Malate, Manila

For further details please call Jerry Milton D. Minguillan/Allan G. Redondo at 405-7169 or 405-7402.

(Sgd.) **BUENO B. CASTILLO**
President and General Manager

(PDI--Feb. 3, 16 & 28, 2003)



Please be informed that **MR. EDGARD M. VITUG**, with last known address at Block 7, Lot 39, Cherryville Street, Taytay, Rizal has a pending Warrant of Arrest under Criminal Case No. 02-1772, issued by the Regional Trial Court of Pasay City, Branch 118, for Qualified Theft.

A cash reward shall be given for any information leading to his arrest. Please contact the Legal Department, MOF Company (Subic), Inc., Tel. 551-3021.

(PDI - Feb. 3, 2003)

INFOTECH

E-mail: pr_info_tech@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Leo Magno

Microsoft not spared by worm attack

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

EVEN computer servers at the Redmond, Washington headquarters of software giant Microsoft Corp. were not spared by the Internet virus attack that targeted the software company's popular SQL database server, a local Microsoft official said.

The global attack last Saturday by the Internet worm known as SQL Slammer slowed down Internet connection and network servers worldwide as it targeted computers using Microsoft's SQL Server. About 250,000 computers worldwide were affected by last Saturday night only a few hours after the worm was detected.

SQL Slammer is the most serious attack on the Internet in more than a year, stranding millions of online users and knocking out bank machines across the United States. Internet traffic slowed to a crawl because of the fast-spreading worm attack which appeared to have hit hardest in Asia. In the Philippines, at least three major Internet service providers were badly hit over the weekend.

Microsoft—which first detected the Internet worm on Jan. 24—had provided a software patch for SQL Server as early as July 2002, which could have prevented the spread of SQL Slammer worldwide. Software patches are regularly provided by software companies like Microsoft as stopgap measures to plug security holes found in their software products.

Ironically, computer systems configured to "test various scenarios" by Microsoft developers in Redmond were not plugged with the latest software patch made available by the company itself through its website.

"The servers we were using in development work were affected," said Mae Rivera, marketing communications manager of Microsoft Philippines.

Rivera could not say if the systems hit were critical, but said that Microsoft's systems slowed down to a crawl last Saturday.

Industry sources indicated that Microsoft suffered a case of a double whammy during the weekend attack. Both the Internet worm, which mainly caused networks to slow down, and the surge of traffic of people accessing Microsoft's website for the software patch, bogged down Microsoft's systems and almost brought its networks to a halt.

Microsoft Philippines estimates that less than 5 percent of its existing customer base for SQL servers were affected by the Internet worm. This prompted Microsoft to reconsider its security policy with clients following the Internet virus attack.

"We want to simplify the software patch management process to make it easier for customers to comply," said Rivera.

Rivera acknowledged that the global attack caused by SQL Slammer prompted Microsoft to rethink its ways on making sure customers are updated with the latest software patches required for its software.

In an e-mail sent out to customers, Microsoft stressed that its "trustworthy computing" policy is a "long-term process," and the latest Internet worm attack reinforces how much work remains for the software firm to deliver security against malicious attacks.

"We understand the importance of this issue and we continue to look for new ways to deliver quality updates in a timely and easy-to-deploy manner. We also realize that SQL Server is a critical component of our customer's enterprise infrastructure. Security pushes like this are part of our commitment to delivering on the vision of trustworthy computing by making our products more secure by design, default and in deployment," the company added.

Lessons from the 'Slammer'

By Gerry Plaza

THOSE victimized by last week's "Slammer" worm attack didn't know what hit them. While we continue to bash Microsoft Corp. for its products' vulnerability to attacks from software viruses, malicious codes and worms, the incident could have been easily prevented.

That is, if we listen to the geeks from Redmond, Washington.

According to trusted sources from within Microsoft, patches to the security flaw from within Microsoft SQL Server 2000 had long been distributed to users. However, as the attack showed, these users may have either ignored calls for constantly updating the software with its regular patch bulletins or received the patch but failed to install it.

The vulnerability, which allows malicious code such as worms to self-generate within the database system and make multiple transmissions across the Internet, was discovered in July 2002. This flaw could not prevent worms from bombarding SQL Server systems with hollow service queries, disallowing legitimate queries from accessing the database. With these transmissions mounting, data transfer slows down and causes denials of service.

Microsoft claimed it released SQL Server Packs 2 and 3 immediately after the discov-

LESSONS/ B17

Philippine IT graduates lag behind Asian counterparts

By Abigail L. Ho

THE COUNTRY'S information technology graduates continue to lag behind their Asian neighbors as they often still need additional training even after years of studying in local IT schools.

Philippine Council for Advanced Science and Technology Research and Development (PCASTRD) executive director Ida Dalmacio said the country was currently ranked way below Asian neighbors like Malaysia and Singapore.

She added that other countries would soon catch up with the Philippines, leaving it at the bottom rung of the IT ladder, if nothing concrete would be done now.

"We used to be in the lead but now we're lagging way behind. We need to get back to where we were before," she said during the presentation of a report on the state of Philippine IT manpower by local e-commerce think-tank Digital Filipino.

The Digital Filipino report stated that some local IT schools produced inadequately trained graduates because of equally ill-trained teachers, "just to maintain profitability."

"Many hire their fresh graduates as teachers for the next batch of students even though they need to have actual experience," the report said. "Some companies blacklisted applications from several schools due to their lack of technical and communications skills."

The report further stated that the English proficiency of local IT graduates has deteriorated because of the use of less English and more Filipino as a medium of instruction in schools.

But both Dalmacio and Digital Filipino were confident that the Philippines still had the potential to regain its leadership status in the region with a few concrete steps that both the government and the private sector could initiate.

One of these is the PCASTRD's scholarship program for students engaged in masters and doctorate degree studies on science-related courses. Since 1989, the agency has been giving scholarships to deserving students engaged in different fields of science. Among these fields is IT.

Dalmacio said more than 30 of PCASTRD's 207 scholars were now enrolled in computer science degree programs.

While PCASTRD scholars could always go abroad in search of greener pastures, she was proud to say that most of them opt to stay in the Philippines and use their knowledge here.

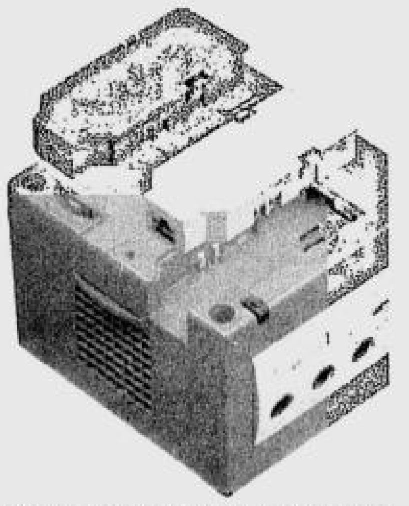
"Very few actually go abroad," she added.

The Department of Science and Technology's Virtual Center for Technology Innovation and Information Technology (VCTI-IT) also conducts trainings for computer programmers, database administrators, networking specialists and IT academicians to help boost the quality of local IT manpower.

At present, it has already trained more than 450 college IT instructors and 300 professionals.

"But we need funding for this. We also want to conduct more baseline studies on software development and outsourcing as well as more trainings outside Metro Manila," VCTI-IT project leader Jaime Caro said. "While we'll still be supported by the DOST, we still need the help of the private sector for this."

GameCube goes online with PSO



THE GAMECUBE can be fitted with a 56K modem or broadband adapter at the bottom of the console. The adapters, some of which are bundled in PSO, are made in the Philippines.

AMY
KNUCKLES
TAILS
SONIC
Lv 25
Lv 25
Lv 25
Lv 25
ウル・ギボン
属性：Native

FIRST, you have to configure your console to dial up to an Internet service provider. Although the GameCube does not have a keyboard, you can input alphanumeric characters using a software keyboard that appears as part of the game's interface on your TV screen. You use the controller to input characters on the virtual keyboard.

ONCE connected to the PSO network, you will be required to purchase a Hunter's License for $8.95 a month or start with a 30-day free trial. You then select a "ship" or server you want to join, and choose from any of 10 blocks on that server. There are six ships in all, and users in each block number in the hundreds.

AFTER MAKING your selection, you are teleported to the ship's lobby where you can chat and interact with other players worldwide. You then invite them to play.

By Leo Magno

NINTENDO'S GameCube is now online-capable, and the first game in its online roster is from SonicTeam and Sega. Called Phantasy Star Online Episodes 1 and 2, this online role-playing game originally developed by Sega for the Dreamcast is now on the GameCube and will be released for the Xbox in March.

PSO was the first next-generation console game to become online in March 2001 through the Dreamcast. However, PSO Episode 1 and 2 for the GameCube contains the original Dreamcast version (Episode 1) with some graphical tweaks, and a new sequel for the GameCube (Episode 2) with new areas to explore.

Playing online using your gaming console for the first time is exciting indeed. Sure, you've played online games on your PCs, and you've probably played network games before. But have you ever tried it using your console and TV set? That's exactly what I experienced for the first time with PSO Episode 1 and 2. If you've already played an adventure game before, imagine having other characters—thousands of them from across the globe—all on the same network playing the same game and appearing on your TV screen. You can even chat with them, trade weapons or just go dragon-bashing together.

But a little background first. In PSO Episode 1 and 2, you play an agent joined by space-faring humans who have emigrated from Earth. A reconnaissance ship called Pioneer 1 was sent out to space to look for another planet for mankind, and found the planet Ragol to be a suitable second home.

Everything in that planet checked out okay, so man launched Pioneer 2 to start settlement. But before Pioneer 2 reaches Ragol, a huge explosion occurs on the planet, and no communications from Pioneer 1 has been received since. Now it's your job to investigate what happened to Pioneer 1, what happened on Ragol and what caused the explosion.

This is where you get to build your character. PSO Episode 1 and 2 offers you three character groups: Hunters, Rangers and Force. Hunters are good with bladed weapons and have high attack points, Rangers are good with guns and have high accuracy, while Force members have low health points but are good in special attacks. Each group has four different types of characters for a total of 12. Then, you get to customize your character according to outfit, skin, hair, proportion, color and others. You then venture forth into the vast areas of the game and try to increase your Mesetas (the currency in PSO) and experience points by killing different beasts on Ragol. You can use your Mesetas to buy more weapons and items.

We review this game on the GameCube

But the story behind PSO Episode 1 and 2 pales in comparison to the excitement of allowing its players worldwide to play online. For this, you need more than just your GameCube and a copy of the PSO Episode 1 and 2 game. You need to have a GameCube dial-up modem or broadband adapter. In my case, I got a Japanese copy of the game which came in a special bundle which already included a dial-up adapter and a memory card. With a little haggling in Singapore, the bundle cost me less than P3,000—the price of one game here in the Philippines. This means I basically got the modem and the memory card for free.

That's the easy part. The hard part is actually getting online.

When I bought the game and adapter bundle, I wasn't sure it would work in the Philippines (the GameCube version of the service is already available commercially in the United States, Europe and

GAMECUBE/ B17

Sil Dragon
Attribute:Native

Despite dismal figures, experts say demand for ICT grads to continue

THE PROJECTED economic turnaround and the continuous growth of the Internet in the next couple of years are just two of the many key factors that will continue to spur the demand for more ICT (information and communication technology) graduates, thus making ICT a viable venue for career opportunities.

These were just some of the views shared by leading ICT industry leaders at the recently held "IT Career Perspectives: Is IT Still In?" symposium catered specifically for students who want to pursue a career in the ICT field. The event, hosted by Carnegie Technology Education-affiliated school Information and Communication Technology Academy (iACADEMY), featured some of the industry's leading IT gurus that spoke on the viability of pursuing IT careers, as well as some invaluable insights on future global IT trends and what it takes to be hired by top IT companies. They also shared some of the latest IT employment trends as well as their personal experiences, objectives and goals for pursuing a career in the IT industry.

Despite the gloom in the IT economy, industry leaders are still very optimistic that it will continue to flourish in the next couple of years. Symposium speaker Sam Jacoba, director for Education and Government of the Enterprise Partner Group at Microsoft Philippines, still sees the industry's full potential especially as far as career opportunities are concerned.

Citing a recent study made by the International Data Corp. (IDC), Jacoba said that the industry is showing a 9.5-percent annual growth in IT employment from 2001 to 2005. Specifically in Asia, the study shows a 36-percent growth in hardware, 81 percent in software and 62 percent in applications.

"This only means that there really is a big space to be filled as far as IT careers are concerned," said Jacoba. "The growth of IT still continues to be a global phenomenon."

Bernard Yu, managing director at Oracle Philippines, likewise said that even though IT has lost its luster, companies will still continue to invest, expand and develop on IT in the coming years.

"IT remains to be productive and efficient and is still one of the fastest-growing industries with its unparalleled speed in technology development," said Oracle's Yu. "This growth generates many sub-industries that can create more jobs, including those developing virus antidote and cures, electronic publication, e-business and multimedia applications."

On the other hand, Dell Philippines Inc. country manager Irene Go-Catane identifies the growth of PC (personal computer) usage as basis for the viability of ICT as a career choice. Citing another study for IDC, Dell's Catane said that there are a total of 9.51 million units shipped in the Asia Pacific in the third quarter of 2002.

"This kind of demand for hardware only shows that companies are still making investments in IT despite a tough economy," she said.

Meanwhile, Ricky Banaag, country manager at Intel Microelectronics Philippines Inc., said that the Internet will still continue to grow and serve as one of the key factors for providing jobs and careers for ICT professionals.

"We will continue to experience information and data growth which would entail further usage of ICT," said Intel's Banaag. "With the convergence of information technology and communication, the industry will continue to be really exciting and is set to go leaps and bounds."

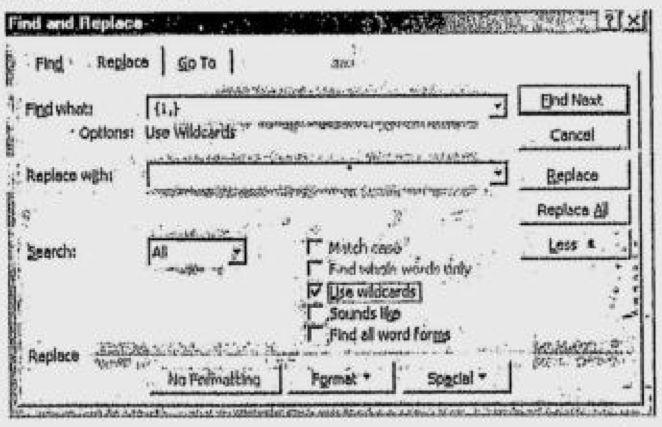
Banaag also shared some of the critical success factors in gaining grounds in the ICT workforce, which include discipline and work ethics, creative thinking, challenging status quo and to never stop learning.

Fermin Taruc, president and CEO of Jupiter Systems Inc., said that youngsters should take advantage of the fact that computer education is now easy to acquire unlike in the old days.

"Even non-computer courses like accounting and math have some sort of connection to IT especially in this day and age," he said. "This only shows that IT gives an added flavor and edge to whatever skill and talent you have—it's just a matter of finding that right combination to be able to succeed in the IT world. It also helps to have a mentor to get you into perspective."

Raymund del Val, president of Sun Microsystems Philippines, believes that staying focused and loving your career are key factors to a successful IT career.

"You should be in IT because you love and you enjoy what you're doing, and not because you had no other choice," Del Val explained. He said that staying focused helps in further developing the skills that are essential in becoming an IT expert.



Find what: {1,}
Options: Use Wildcards
Replace with:
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☐ Match case
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☐ Find all word forms

Extra spaces in MS Word

By Jerry Liao

THERE will be instances wherein you may have typed more than one space between words in your document especially if you're in hurry. You can let MS Word check, find and remove extra spaces within your document. Here's how:

POWERTIPS

(1) Open your MS Word document.

(2) Go to "Edit" then "Replace."

(3) Click on the "More" button and select the "Use wildcards" checkbox.

(4) In the "Find what" box, type: space, left brace, 1 (one), comma and right brace, like this: {1,}.

(5) In the "Replace with" box, just type one space.

(6) Click "Replace All."

For more tips, visit www.brainshare.com.ph. Join The Powertips Group! Register online at www.brainshare.com.ph/register.htm and get free tips.

Lessons from . . .

From page B16

ery to address the security flaw. It also said companies that had installed the packs were not affected by the worm attack.

Users who ignored the security bulletin paid dearly for it. "Slammer" affected close to 250,000 computer systems around the world. It broke down the central telecommunications facility in South Korea and prevented depositors from a leading American bank to withdraw money from its 13,000 ATMs. The Internet slowdown was felt around the world—shutting down systems and leaving users unable to access the Internet and retrieve crucial data from affected databases.

Its origins are still unknown and are currently under investigation. However, security experts point to a China-based hacker as a possible suspect. The hacker, who authored the vicious "Lion" worm that attacked Linux systems, was said to have discussed "Slammer" in some message boards. But no conclusive findings were reached.

Probers, in this regard, may even be facing a blank wall. The worm's small file size would render it untraceable, given that important identification strings are likewise missing.

As the investigation on the first major Internet attack for the year continues, reports revealed that most companies were left virtually unscathed. Owe that to proper and appropriate response to security bulletins, which vendors, like Microsoft, regularly provide customers.

The lesson learned? Never ignore these security bulletins and patches. These are being given to customers for the main reason that possibilities of security breaches from hackers abound and should not be taken for granted.

Certainly after the "Slammer" attack, IT administrators and SQL Server users would now regularly check the Update page from Microsoft for security patches and if there are such, install them right away on the systems in question. Consider that now as priority action from thereon.

GameCube goes online with PSO

From page B16

Japan). And since I had an import copy of the game, the instructions for going online were all in Kanji characters (the game itself, however, has an English option).

After consulting the Nintendo and Sega websites, I found out that the first step was to fix the settings on your GameCube to connect to your Internet service provider. First you plop in the online adapter at the bottom of the GameCube, grab the 12-foot phone cord (included in the bundle) and connect it to your phone line. Place the memory card and the PSO Episode 1 and 2 game in the GameCube and choose the "Online game" option. This is where it starts getting hairy.

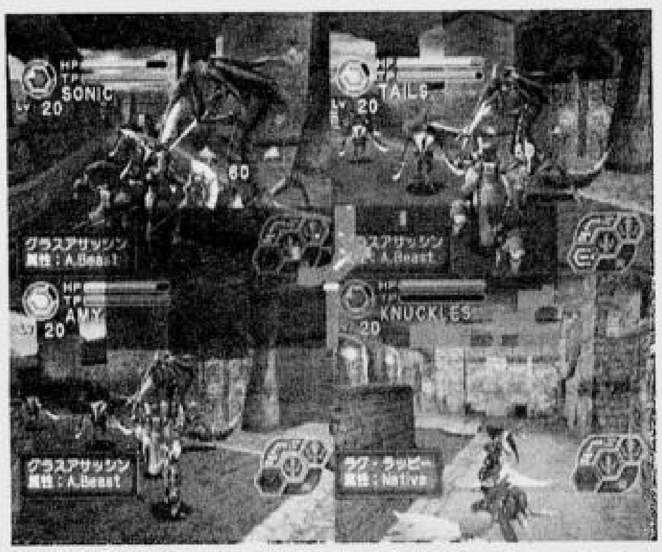
Since the instructions were all in Japanese I had to guess where to place the required data such as phone number, name of provider, proxy settings and DNS entry. It was like setting up your first Internet account while blindfolded. Since the GameCube does not have a keyboard (although third-party providers sell them in Japan), you use a keyboard interface which appears on the TV screen to input the entries one by one. Then you click blindly on the buttons and assume that the one on the left means "yes" and the one on the right means "no."

Eventually I was able to hook up to the PSO server, and boy what a relief it was!

However, the system was asking me for a Hunter's License, the monthly fee for playing PSO. While the first month is free, you have to renew the license for $8.95 a month through your credit card. I consulted the Internet again and found some help in navigating myself through the sea of Kanji characters onscreen, and eventually was able to obtain the free 30-day trial.

Once logged on, you choose a ship you want to board—either Sirius, Procyon, Castor, Pollux, Betelgeuse or Rigel. These "ships," named after stars, are actually the servers available for PSO Episode 1 and 2. Each ship has 10 blocks to choose from, so you can imagine how many people can go online. After choosing a ship and a block you want to join, you can check how many users and teams there are. You can then join teams or you can create your own. Or you can hang out in the lobby and see the characters of the other players. Using the software keyboard again, you can chat with any of them.

Socializing in PSO Episode 1 and 2, however, is not always easy. Since I was on the Japanese server, a lot of the players were conversing in Japanese. There were some from the United States, but most of them simply don't respond to you. Remember your first time in a chat room and no one seemed interested to talk to you or they all have their own private groups? It's the same thing. As in any online gathering, there will be groups of people who just want to play among themselves—no strangers allowed. In one instance, I joined unannounced a team of guys beyond Level 100, and after introducing my Level 3 character, one of them typed in: "OK, everyone offline!" The next thing I knew they were all gone.



PHANTASY Star Online can also be played offline with your friends via the Multimode, a split-screen free-moving adventure for up to four people.

However, PSO Episode 1 and 2 is not just about chatting and sending emoticons and trading. The thrill of playing with someone overseas is a far cry from playing a multiplayer game with friends huddled around your TV.

But Phantasy Star Online is not just for those who are on the PSO network. Playing the game offline is equally fun. In fact, the multiplayer version of the game is also a big draw—even if you get to play with three other friends and not with people somewhere else in the world. Although the online version of PSO Episode 1 and 2 is quite an experience, the game can stand alone even without the online option.

What's more, you can beef up your character offline by playing the game on your own and earning experience points. However, the game could use more depth as far as character development is concerned. Don't expect a Morrowind kind of title with this one. The enemies are also too predictable—they make a beeline for your attacks.

Even when I'm online using the dial-up GameCube adapter, the lag time is so negligible that you'd think your teammates or anyone you meet at the lobby are just seated beside you. There are times, though, when the game freezes for about 10 seconds when somebody is joining your team online. Also, when you pick up items in an online game, I notice a one-second delay compared to doing it offline. Sometimes your teammate's character would skip from one place to another by about a body's length, but most of the time you'd be running side by side as if it were a local multiplayer game. Generally, the latency is negligible online.

But then again, what's the use of playing online if you have no one to play with? I have been playing PSO Episode 1 and 2 online for two weeks now and I found this to be true, especially since I don't know anyone else in the Philippines who's online with the GameCube (if there are any of you out there, drop me a line).

In summary, playing the GameCube's first online game was a thrilling experience, but I think it is one which will wear out soon. I don't intend to renew my Hunter's License beyond the 30-day trial period.

While the ride is a great one, I would suggest that you hold off your investment on making your GameCube online until more games aside from PSO Episode 1 and 2 come out, or until your friends also go online on the GameCube.

Porn to be available on 3G cell phones in Europe, US

WITH THE ADVENT of high-bandwidth connections and mobile phones with colored monitors and multimedia support, is pornography over your mobile phones a good business proposition?

Yes, according to a Spanish firm, as it makes a rather fearless forecast that pornography will be a major driver on the growth of 3G or third generation communications technology—which allows, among others, streaming video over mobile phones.

Private Media Group Inc., a publicly traded company based in Spain which provides adult media content, claims that the advent of mobile phones and high-bandwidth connections will be catalysts for users to want to have pornography in their mobile phones.

An executive of the Spanish firm was quoted in an interview as saying that "adult services usually account for 80 percent of the traffic on the Internet and that the trend will be the same with mobile Internet."

And online pornography is big business, according to various reports.

One estimate puts the value of online pornography to reach $70 billion by 2006. Out of this figure, an estimated $4 billion could come from mobile telephony, if and when telecommunications providers agree to allow content providers to offer adult content to mobile users.

The Private Media Group executive further claimed that "mobility will increase the impulse to buy, and it is also more discreet."

And there seems to be early takers in mobile pornography, particularly in the Netherlands, where sending of pictures via multimedia messaging service, is now being used to distribute porn, reports said.

Private Media Group founder Berth Milton even claims that the company now has agreements with telecommunications companies in Europe, particularly in Private Media Group's home turf in Spain. Further, the company reported that it also expects to launch mobile porn in the United States soon, as it is currently in discussion with US-based telecommunications providers.

Aside from Internet pornography, Private Media Group also provides porn content on various media formats including still photography, motion pictures, print publications, DVDs, CD-ROMs and video tapes.

The company is listed under Yahoo.com's financial directory and was mentioned in Forbes' magazine as a leading provider of services all oriented to the adult entertainment market.

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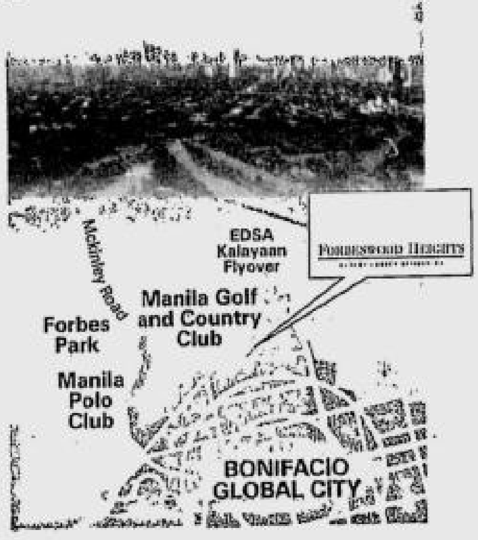

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How will Iraq war impact on economy?

By Dennis M. Arroyo
Contributor

US PRESIDENT George W. Bush has presented his case before the world audience. He is resolved to go to war, with or without the support of the United Nations. People now worry about the bloodshed from smart bombs and weapons of mass destruction: chemical agents and vials of viruses.

Looking beyond the horror of war, people know that the conflict will also affect the economy. As such, this piece puts together analyses from various quarters and applies them to the Philippines.

Three scenarios

What will likely happen? The Center for Strategic Studies in Washington DC has examined 3 scenarios for war in Iraq.

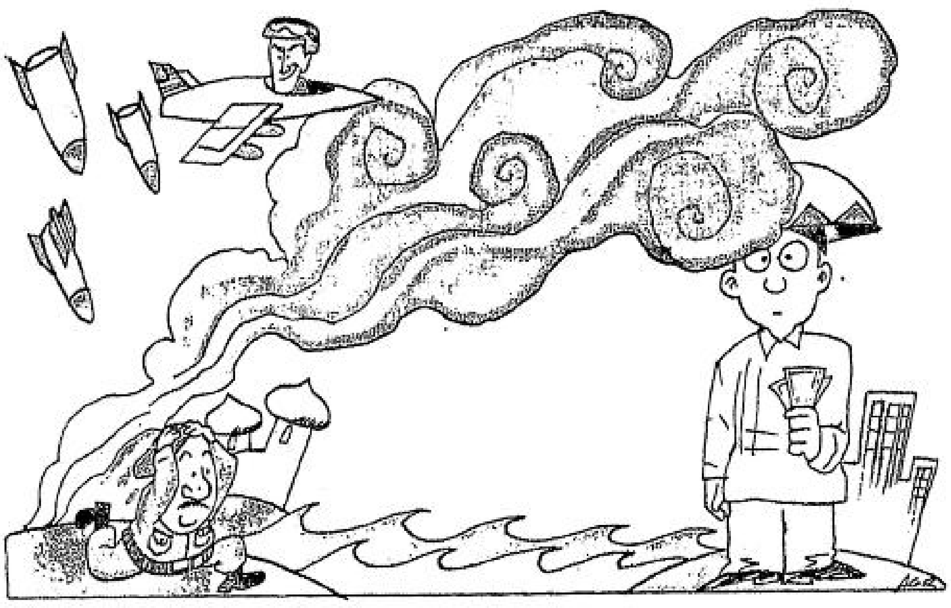
Its benign scenario (with a probability of 40-60 percent) looks at a decisive US victory in 4 or 6 weeks. America's oil supply is not threatened. After the war, oil prices sink, favoring the economy.

Its intermediate scenario (30-40 percent probability) imagines some damage to oil facilities, fighting in the cities, and a war of three months. This would already have "serious adverse effects" on America's economy.

Its worst-case scenario (5-10 percent probability) pictures a war of three to six months, much damage to Iraq's oil facilities, tremendous unrest in the Middle East, and terror attacks in the United States. This can result in a global recession.

Interest rates, inflation, dollar rate

The war will likely affect the economy in the following ways.



It will raise US interest rates because the government will spend much for the conflict. A second Iraq war will cost $ 100 billion to $ 200 billion.

That's around 5-10 percent of the US federal budget. The estimate is to be compared with the $ 58 billion for the first Gulf war. Higher interest rates in the States will jack up rates here in the Philippines.

A new Iraq conflict will unleash inflation, as wars always do. When labor and factories are channeled to military production, the economy tends to heat up with higher prices. Inflation in the States will wash on to the Philippines via imports.

Oil prices will rise, but probably not as much as they did during the Gulf War. Recall that the said prices doubled after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. However, conditions are different now: the 1990 Gulf War threatened not only Iraq's oil supply but also Kuwait's. Today, petroleum is already costly because the risk of war already has been factored in its price.

Iraq also trades little of its oil in the world market because of UN sanctions. It exports 700,000 barrels of oil every day, in contrast to world demand of 77 million barrels—the ratio is less than one percent.

Hence, the rise in oil prices won't be very dramatic—unless the entire Middle East is dragged into the conflict. During times of crisis, investors tend to park their funds in "safe"

HOW/ C2

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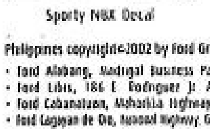
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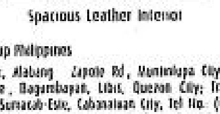
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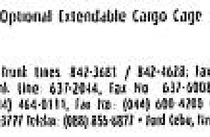
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Enhancing entrepreneurship through partnerships

MAPping THE FUTURE

Edward L. Fereira

AN in-depth look at the Fortune 200 reveals that individual entrepreneurs started nearly all of America's largest corporations. Take for example, the General Electrics, Rockefellers and Fords of the world. They did not just arise out of thin air! They were started by entrepreneurs who look a lot like young people today who toil to build a company in their own garage or spare bedroom.

People who see an opportunity and ask, "Why not?" But even in our very own country we see similar phenomenon, like the cases of Jollibee, SM and Robinsons.

To stand before successful and distinguished leaders on the occasion of my inauguration as MAP's President for the year 2003 is indeed a humbling experience. I am however overjoyed and honored to now belong to the roster of MAP's distinguished Presidents. But, what makes it even more fulfilling and rewarding is the fact that levity aside, I am the very first president of this prestigious organization to come from the entrepreneurial ranks.

With this, I express my utmost gratitude for the overwhelming support I received at MAP's recently concluded elections. Your trust inspires me to dream big for our organization thus, prompting me to focus on what I consider the lifeblood of modern economies: the entrepreneurs.

That's why, we have chosen as this year's theme: "Enhancing Entrepreneurship Through Partnerships."

I know that tough times hover above us. Dark clouds of pessimism and distrust are evident almost everywhere even amongst us. We may choose to dwell on the negatives and simply dream of a better future or we can now take bolder steps towards helping our country and our people realize the promise of a brighter tomorrow.

The words of Admiral Hyman Rickover fittingly capture my thoughts and feelings for tonight and I quote: "I believe it is the duty of each of us to act as if the fate of the world depended on our actions because in a society that is willing to accept mediocrity, the opportunities for failure are boundless." End of quote.

Invariably, we cannot accept any mediocrity. Opportunities for success abound. This is why MAP shall now carry out a proactive role in helping our government achieve its goals for economic recovery and development and a strong Republic.

We, at the Management Association of the Philippines shall therefore take it as our mission to re-energize and sustain partnerships for local entrepreneurs and their corporate brothers.

Partnerships my friends are not just good for individual businesses; but they help promote the country's economic growth as well. With an enhanced alliance between and among entrepreneurs and corporations, our country will become strong in terms of new business creation, development and expansion.

Through and with these partnerships, we shall build linkages with government agencies, the academe, civil societies and other organizations. This way, entrepreneurs will not only gain access to local as well as international expertise but also to new resources, customers, and other stakeholders.

These linkages contribute to stronger businesses which in turn create new jobs and wealth for the local economy.

Given these, the task before us is likened to a seeding process, which will hopefully lead to the growth and expansion of successful entrepreneurs who can compete globally, as local captains of our industries. This seeding process my friends, has for its breeding ground the various MAP programs where experiences of entrepreneurial companies and their corporate partners are shared; where role models are celebrated and where entrepreneurial values are emulated.

Under the collective leadership of the MAP, we will help promote the goal of nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship in the Philippines.

Our country's entrepreneurs will find a proactive resource in and through MAP. As their needs evolve, new or established entrepreneurs can learn on the job or they can learn from the best mentors of all: the MAP members themselves!

But in building a culture of entrepreneurship, we will not just rely on hard assets like infrastructure and capital. But, we will also harness one of the country's greatest assets—the indomitable spirit of a Filipino to make things happen and what Denis Waitley may have referred to in his book Empires of the Mind, and I quote . . . "The only empire that will survive in the 21st century, will be the empire you build within your mind."

MAP could also serve as a sounding board or as a forum where policymakers can try out new ideas or get regular feedback on new or current business related initiatives and economic strategies.

My friends, perhaps I may sound like a dreamer, but I dream with open eyes. After all, it gives me hope to think that most of what we now enjoy all started as a dream.

Ladies and Gentlemen: allow me to take this opportunity to share with you the story of The Dreamer and the Worker:

The King commanded the Dreamer, "Build for me the most beautiful palace."

The Dreamer spent many days and nights sketching beautiful designs for the palace. After several months, the King went to the site where the palace was to be built but he saw nothing on it.

"Where is the palace, I asked you to build?" the King asked the Dreamer.

The Dreamer handed to the King a thick bundle of beautiful plans and designs. Dismayed, the King replied "What are these? They are but plans. I need a palace."

The King sent him away and called for the Worker. When the worker was before him the King said, "Build a palace for me."

So, the Worker went to the site and eagerly started to build the palace. He worked on it day and night and after a week it was finished.

The King was notified and he visited the site. However, he was dismayed again to see an ugly edifice and proceeded to dismiss the Worker.

As the Worker walked away from the King, he passed by the Dreamer on the roadside. The two spoke about what had happened to them.

The Dreamer then proposed, "We are useless if we work separately. Let's together build the palace. I shall design the palace and you build it."

So, both of them went back to the site and built the palace with the Dreamer doing the plans while the Worker building. When it was finished they called the King. It was the most beautiful palace the King had ever seen.

"Who built this?" the King said.

And they answered, "The two of us!"

"From now on" the King answered, "the two of you must always work together because dreams without labors are useless, just as labors without dreams are worthless."

With this story, let me share with you my own humble philosophy:

"To recognize, the capability of a person is a virtue; but to give that person a chance to prove his capability, it is more than a responsibility, it is a life's commitment."

Ladies and Gentlemen, my friends: MAP will work hard as a dedicated champion in enhancing entrepreneurship through partnerships. We have the passion and credibility to fulfill our vision knowing that in one way or another, we are all entrepreneurs at heart.

And as what our founding chairman, Mr. Washington Sycip thought when they started MAP, "We are all managers as we are all entrepreneurs."

(The author is CEO of Ferycor International Management Group, Inc. This is his inaugural address during the 54th MAP Inaugural Meeting last Jan. 29 in Malacañang Palace. For comments, e-mail mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

How will Iraq war impact on economy?

From page C1

currencies like the US dollar. That will make the dollar more expensive in peso terms; in other words the peso will depreciate.

Dampening business

The mood of business in general will be depressed because of the new element of terrorism. Since Sept. 11, 2001 the sword of horrific violence has hung over the globe, dampening investments.

Consider that an invasion on Iraq will (a) provoke acts of retaliation by sympathetic terrorists around the world, and (b) divert America's security resources from domestic protection to foreign deployment. The United States will be more vulnerable, and successful attacks, even if far smaller in scale than 9-11, will shake business.

This will impact on America's stock market. The US share index will likely decline, just as it did during the years of World War II to the Korean War.

The fall in business activity in the United States will thus cool business in the Philippines, by shrinking the export market and through movements in share prices.

Time element

Will the whole process take long? During the first Gulf War, if Iraq had been defeated quicker, oil prices would have normalized faster. It appears that a second conflict will indeed be finished earlier. In 1990 it took the United States six months to mobilize US troops in a massive deployment. This time the US will use fewer soldiers and more technology, so the deployment and the war should be much more rapid.

The Iraqis will not likely fight a long war to defend Saddam's regime, for much of the population are Kurds and Shiite Muslims who resent the government.

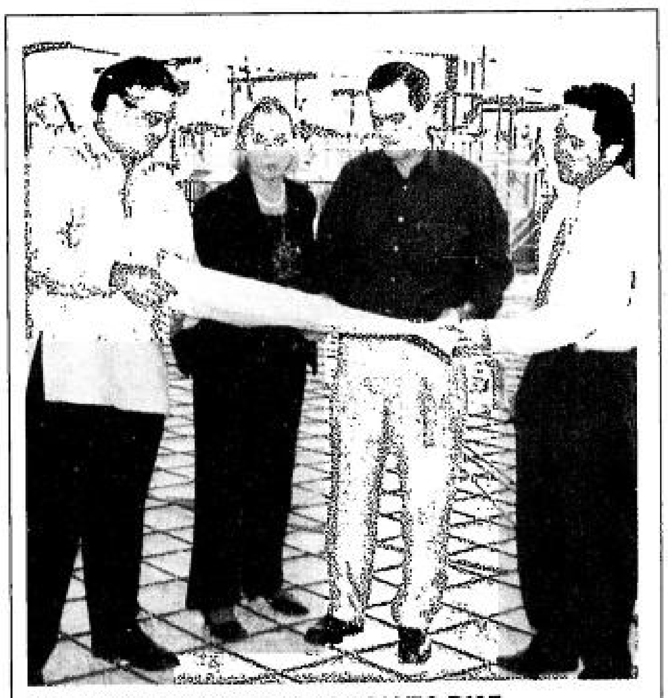
Global terrorism

What about the risk of global conflict and oil supply disruption?

One scenario is that war in Iraq will push the people of Saudi Arabia to revolt against their royalty. A revolutionary government will sharply cut oil exports to make a statement. But chances of a successful revolution there seem remote.

The more plausible threat is that Saddam hits back at Middle East countries allied with America. Missiles lobbed at Saudi Arabia and Kuwait can cut global oil flows. Scuds hitting Israel may provoke a counter-attack by Tel Aviv, widening the conflict into a war with many Arab nations.

All told, the war will likely be quick. Cause for worry though are the acts of terrorism to hit countries that supported the invasion. *Comments to (darroyo@philonline.com)*



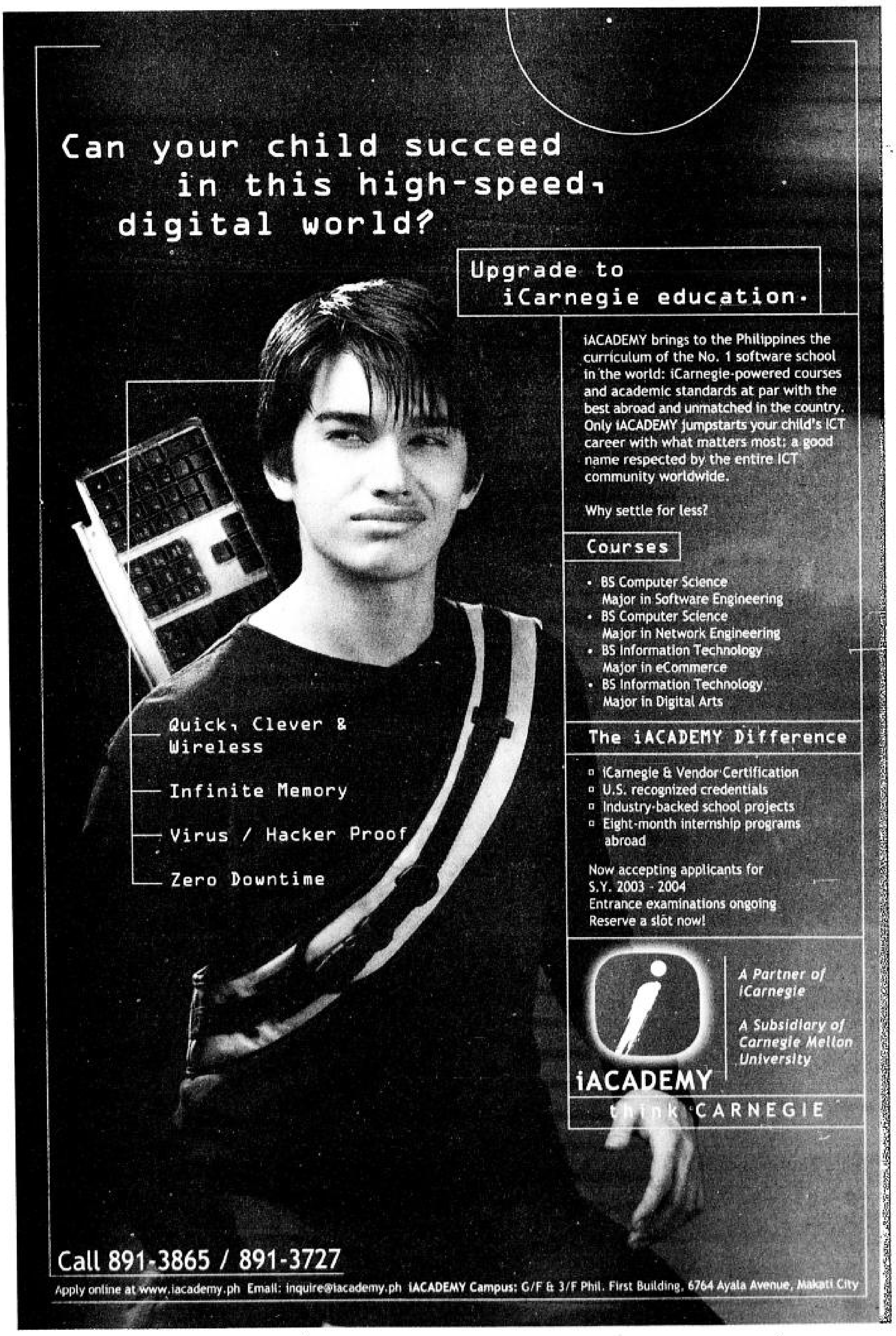
SHANG GRAND TOWER SOON TO RISE

Construction of the sales office and model units of the 5-star plus Shang Grand Tower residential condominium is now in full swing.

Due for completion in April, located a Fort Bonifacio opposite Pacific Plaza Towers, the sales office will showcase two furnished model units: 152 square meter two bedroom and also three bedroom units with a total floor area of 274 square meters. Top building contractor Phil Sundt and Hong Kong landscape architects Belt Collins, are handling the project.

The 46-story tower, located at the corner of Perea, Nieva and De La Rosa Streets in Legaspi Village in Makati, will offer a mix of elegantly designed one, two, three and four bedroom units. All units will be equipped with modern appliances. Amenities will include gardens, a swimming pool and a spa.

Due for completion in late 2005, the five-star plus Tower residential condominium is a development of the Kuok Group of Companies, developers of Shangri-la Hotels and Resorts, Enterprise Center and Shangri-la Plaza Mall. Other developments are in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Canada and Australia. For more information, call 638-2112.



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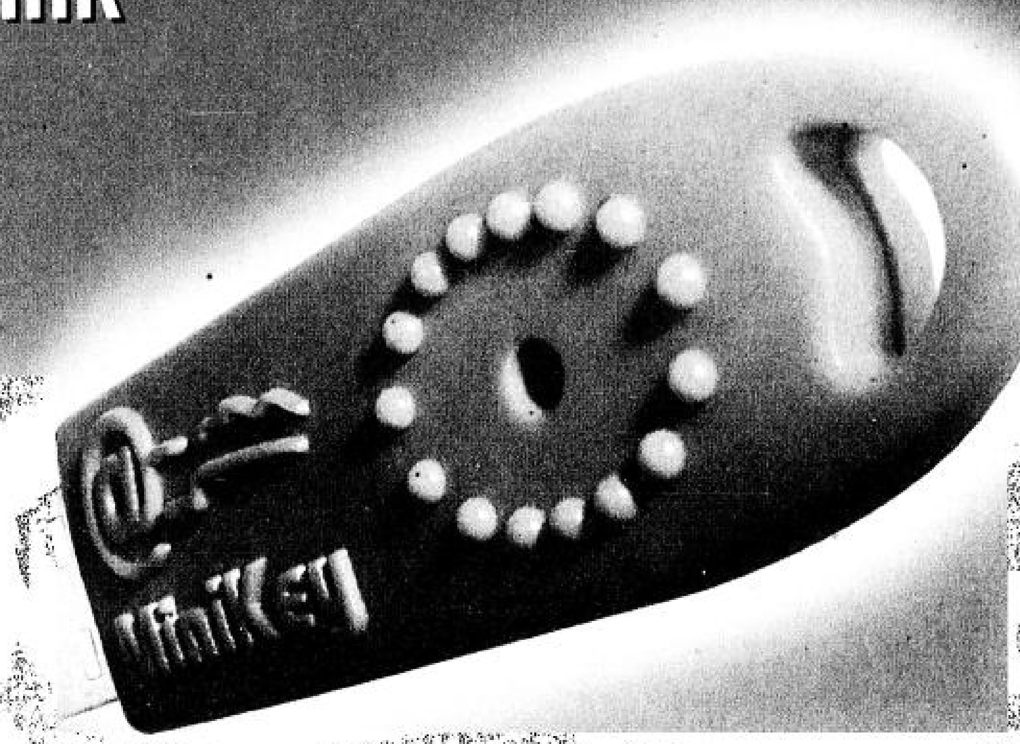

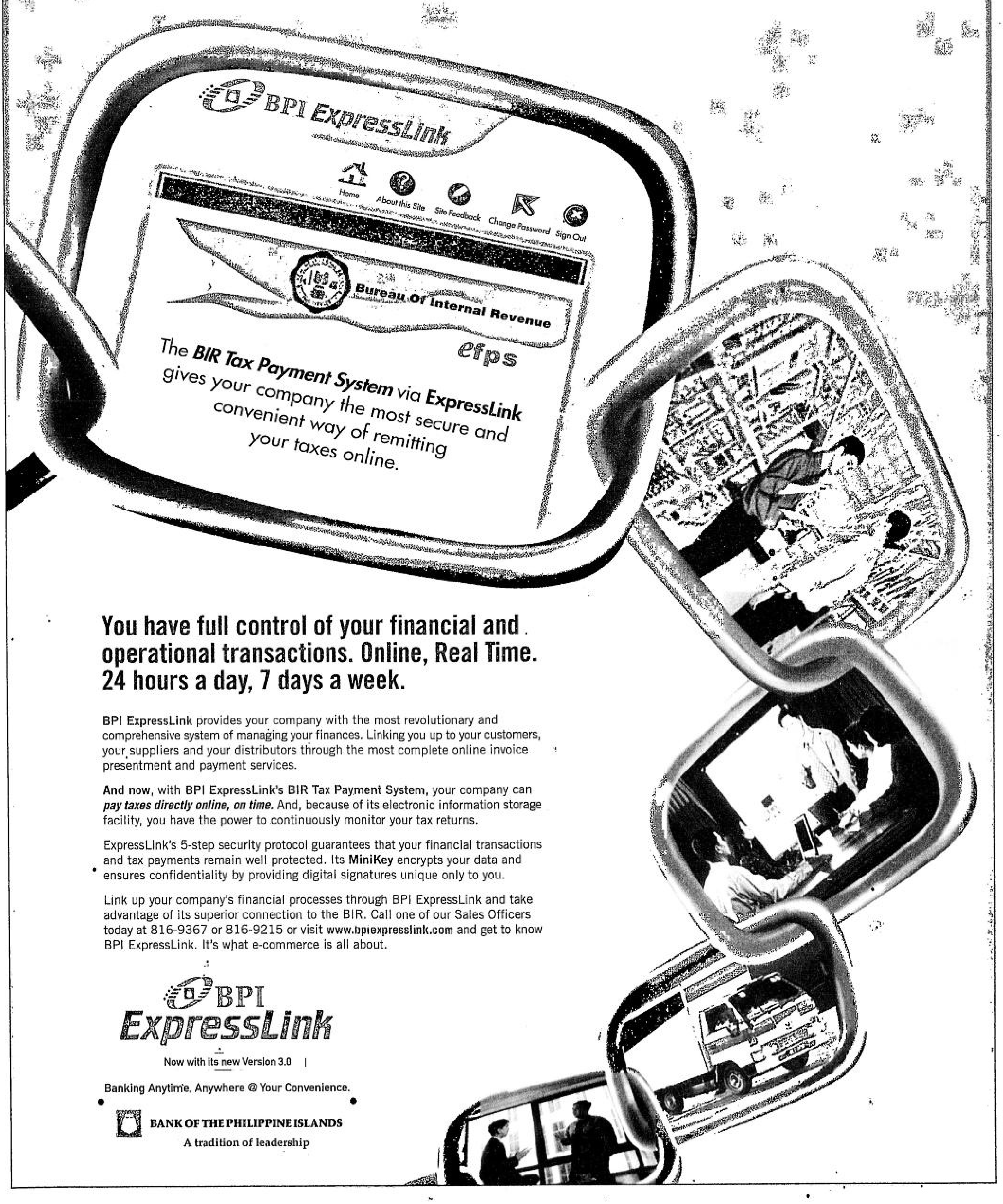

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A tradition of leadership

Sales capability building process that works

By Manuel Q. Santos
Contributor

DISTRIBUTION makes a great difference in winning or losing in the marketplace. You may have the best quality product using state-of-the-art manufacturing technology, but if your product is not available and not within arms reach of desire of consumers (as how Coca-Cola defines availability), where they want it and when they want it, then you automatically lose your quality and technology advantage.

Coca-Cola and Pepsi Cola, known for their distribution competencies, spend huge fortune in continuously perfecting their respective product distribution systems to sustain ubiquity and widespread availability of their products at the point of purchase. They also ensure that the billions spent in advertising, promotions and sponsorships do not go down the drain. After all, creating product awareness through these activities do not translate to sales and profit until the consumer looks for the product and actually finds it at the store where he wants to purchase it. If he does not find your product, he will not look elsewhere but try to buy another brand since he is among 60 percent of consumers classified as switchers, i.e., consumers who have no brand loyalty. They buy whatever brand is available.

Making distribution a major competency and competitive advantage requires understanding first what distribution really is—its underlying concepts and principles. Then, it's a matter of building your distribution capability and winning the game.

What is sales distribution?

Distribution is traditionally defined as moving the products from the point of manufacture to the point of purchase. This definition just describes the physical aspect of product movement. It does not emphasize the more significant aspect of selling the product to the retailers, convincing them to carry the products in their stores thereby making the products "within arms reach of desire" of consumers.

Segregating the "physical" and "selling" aspect of distribution will result in a more focused, effective and dynamic management of the distribution function. Physical distribution refers to the economical and efficient movement of products from manufacturing to the warehouses.

Sales distribution refers to the selling aspect of distribution that brings the products from the warehouse to the stores (or points of purchase) as a result of a focused selling effort.

Coca-Cola defines sales distribution in precise terms—sales distribution is the process of carrying out marketing strategies at the point of purchase to satisfy the needs of customers and consumers while generating profitable sales growth.

Interrelated objectives

Sales distribution is execution of marketing strategies at the point of purchase where sales are made. Marketing strategies could be merchandising excellence programs, or specific in-store trade push/trade pull promotion programs. Execution is always guided by three interrelated objectives:

1. To satisfy the needs of customers (retailers) and consumers (end-users);
2. To carry out marketing strategies; and
3. To generate profitable sales growth.

Sales distribution is all about executing the necessary activities in the store to effect consumer purchase whether it is done by the company sales team or a third party distributor or wholesaler.

Lack of understanding of what sales distribution is reduces sales teams and third party distributors to mere delivery teams. Sales growth becomes solely dependent only on how strong the brand equity is, not on how well marketing strategies were executed at the point of purchase.

A clear understanding by the sales teams of sales distribution, specifically its underlying concepts and principles, ensures consistent and effective execution of in-store activities, thus largely negating any brand equity advantage of competitors or greatly reinforcing the company's brand equity advantage. As customers and consumer needs are satisfied at the point-of-purchase, relationships are developed, customer and consumer loyalty is built and eventually market leadership is achieved—where it counts most—at the point of purchase.

Distribution functions

The sales distribution process can be divided into three functions:

1. Selling is the activity executed in a professional and systematic manner to convince the retail store owner to buy the company's brands and packages. It also includes selling value-added services like new promotions, equipment placement, advertising and signage. The salesman or account representative must have the confidence and skill to "win every customer."

2. Merchandising is an ongoing process of properly presenting the products to consumers to draw their attention at the point of purchase. It accomplishes three things:

- Make your products available; ensuring that the right brands and packages are what are in the store;
- Make your products accessible—to be seen and in arms reach for impulse purchases; and
- Make your products attractive, fresh every time.

3. Delivery is the last stage of the distribution process where the right brands and packages are brought in the store at the right time and right quantity. Delivery must be done in an efficient and effective manner through the design of economical and logical delivery sequence and frequency. An effective distribution system will depend so much on the company's system and people capability to execute the selling, merchandising and delivery functions exceedingly well.

3A strategy

For companies with fast moving consumer products (FCMP), availability, affordability and acceptability of their products become paramount to business growth. Coke calls this the 3A Strategy, which it has adapted globally.

The 3As, when consistently provided and experienced by the consumer at the point-of-purchase, leads to sustained business growth. Business success is mainly anchored on how well the company satisfies the needs of consumers for low priced, quality products and making these products available within arms reach of desire at the time and place they are needed.

Sales distribution plays a major role in making the 3A strategy happen as it is at the point of purchase where the consumer should experience the 3As. The store is where the consumer purchases the product. His trip to the store should enable him to know that the product is in the store, sold at the suggested retail price, and of the quality he expects.

The consumer's experience becomes a "moment of truth" on whether the sales team or distributor is consistently doing its job of sustaining product availability, acceptability and affordability in the retail store such as:

For availability:

1. Consistent sales call and on-time delivery of company products;
2. Managing outlet inventory needs to prevent product stock-outs;
3. Expanding brand and package placement; and
4. Increasing outlet coverage and productive calls.

For affordability:

1. Convincing outlets to adhere to suggested retail price;
2. Placement of price posters; and
3. Routing efficiently and effectively.

For acceptability:

1. Rotating stocks to ensure product freshness;
2. Pull out of expired stocks;
3. Cleaning product display; and
4. Placing and maintaining merchandising materials.

The 3A strategy is an overall business strategy and a common goal for all functions. Sales, however, play a crucial role as it will execute this strategy where it counts most—at the retail outlets. Every member of the sales organization as well as the wholesalers and distributors should fully understand and appreciate the 3A strategy and internalize this strategy as their all-important mission.

Building capability

Sustaining availability, affordability and acceptability requires consistent and quality execution by the sales team as well as third party distributors of the sales distribution activities at the point of purchase. Consistent and quality execution depends a lot on the capabilities of the sales people including third party distributors who will execute the distribution functions of selling, merchandising and delivery.

Structure, processes, tools and skills are key components of capability building:

- Structure defines and aligns roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. Tasks should be designed consistent with the objectives of each position.
- Processes are the step by step procedures to be followed to execute the tasks.
- Tools are the forms that are used to facilitate task execution.
- Skills are the competencies required to perform roles and tasks exceedingly well.

In building sales distribution capability, each key person in the distribution function should execute his role supported by a well-defined structure, using simple processes and tools and trained in the competencies or skills required performing his tasks. Capability building should be an ongoing activity and specifically focused on:

The sales supervisor. The sales supervisor's main role is to grow his territory's sales volume profitably through his salesmen. To do this, he should perform three key tasks:

1. Tracking salesmen's performance;
2. Setting sales objectives for his sales territory, and
3. Coaching his salesmen.

To perform these tasks well, the supervisor should have an organized process and a set of tools to track performance, set objectives and coach.

The territory structure should be organized in a way that enables him to focus on these three tasks 80 percent of the time. Most sales supervisors are saddled with "firefighting" and coordinating activities like following up deliveries and truck repairs that he cannot grow his territory's business. This is mainly caused by a sales structure that makes the sales supervisor more of a coordinator than a coach to his salesmen.

Pepsi's sales capability building program is anchored on building, first and foremost, the sales supervisor's capability through their worldwide Territory University program.

The salesman. Building the salesman's capability is an important aspect of the supervisor's coaching function and is essentially focused on building the salesmen's skills and confidence in winning every customer in his sales territory.

The salesman must have the confidence in relating to the customer and the salesmanship to effectively sell the company's brands and packages.

The lack of a focused and continuous learning program for the salesman reduces the salesman to a mere delivery person resulting in lost sales opportunities.

There are three areas where the salesman's skills and confidence should be built to make him truly capable:

- Effectively executing the routine sales call and merchandising activities;
- Convincing the customer to buy suggested orders and increase brand and package availability; and
- Selling to new accounts and expand outlet coverage.

The salesman should be provided simple processes, tools and skills to effectively execute the following tasks:

- Executing the sales call;
- Effective merchandising;
- Making effective sales presentations;
- Overcoming objections;
- Securing the sale; and
- Selling to new accounts.

The salesman's capability program should follow the Teach, Learn and Do approach.

Salesmen attend a 30-45 minute classroom session conducted by the supervisor prior to fieldwork. An on-the-job application of skills learned, coached and assessed by the supervisor, follows.

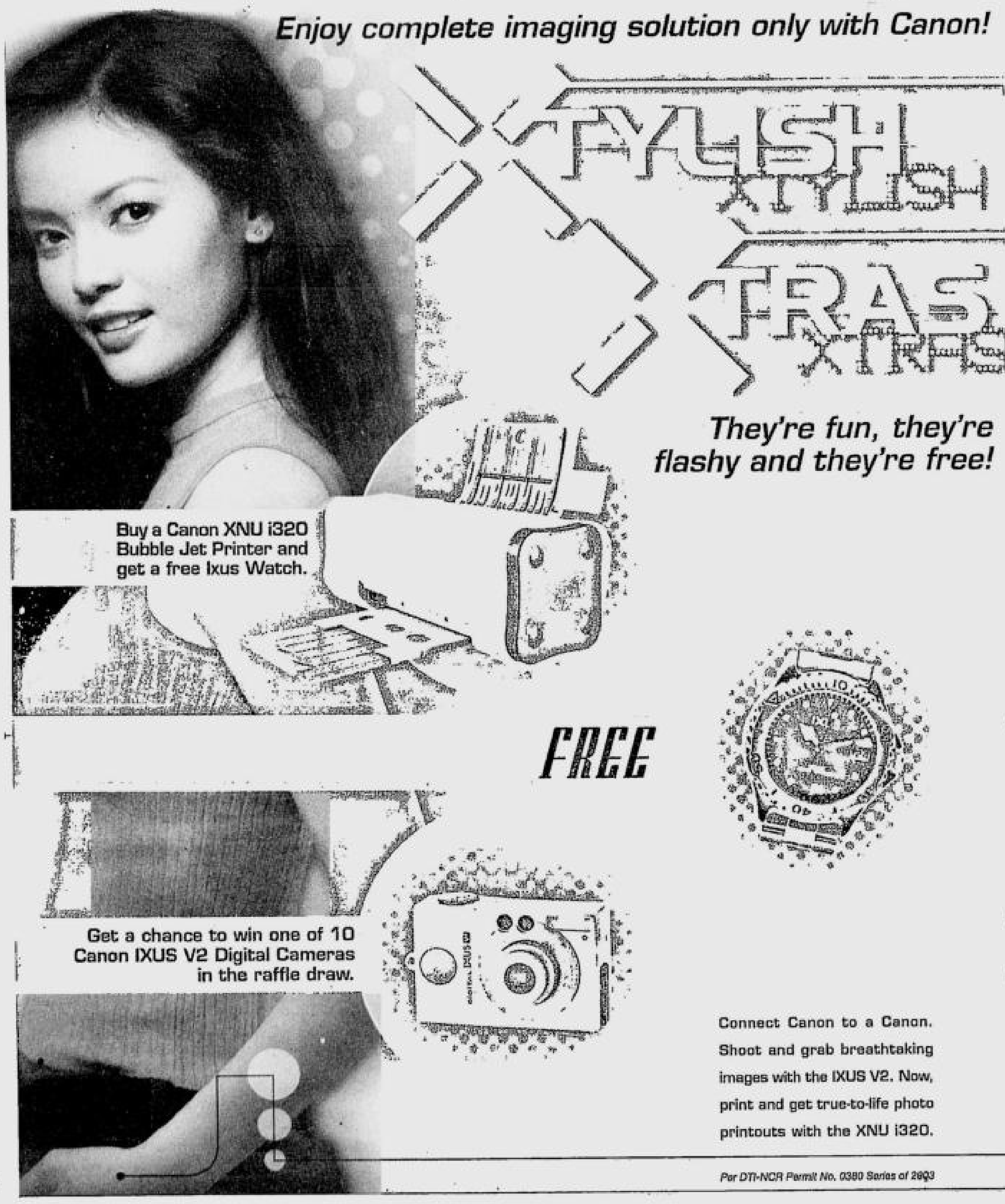
An important aspect is developing pride and passion in his profession as salesman. The six basic skills will be useless if the salesman does not have the right attitude and motivation to sell. Tom Hopkins, the world famous professional selling guru, sees selling, first and foremost, as a matter of attitude—the salesman must see his profession as a daily challenge of doing better today than yesterday and find fulfillment and satisfaction in meeting and winning these challenges. Thus, building the salesman's capability should also be focused on attitude and values as well.

The third party distributor. Consider having small third party distributors to serve smaller customers in tertiary markets and expand distribution and outlet coverage. The more outlets covered, the higher the sales.

Having a capability building program for small distributors or wholesalers, not only ensures their effective contribution to the sales objectives but also develops a long term, mutually beneficial and loyal partnership with them. This naturally results in business closeness.

Small third-party distributors are small entrepreneurs. Building their capability should cover all areas of entrepreneurship such as cash flow management, inventory management, customer relations, route and sales force management and people motivation. Coke has implemented programs for their wholesalers such as "Kitang Kita Ang Kita," a profitability improvement program, and "For D' Boys," a motivational and skills program for wholesaler personnel. Pepsi, on the other hand, had their Wholesaler Partnering Program aimed to develop and sustain long-term partnership with its wholesalers.

(The author is a freelance consultant on building systems and people capability in sales distribution. He used to work with Coke and Pepsi.)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MECHANICS:
1. For every purchase of Canon XNU i320 Bubble Jet printer from February 3 to March 3, 2003, a customer gets a free Ixus Watch and is entitled to a raffle coupon for a chance to win 1 of 10 Canon Ixus V2 Digital Cameras.
2. Customer/s must fill up the raffle coupon with their name, address, affix their signature, dealer where the item was purchased, contact number/s and the printer serial number and mail entries to:
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3. Only entries received on or before March 15, 2003 are qualified to join the promotion.
4. Raffle draw is on March 20, 2003 at the Canon Head Office in the presence of a DTI representative.
5. A customer can win only once.
6. Winners will be notified through registered mail as well as via telephone.
7. For provincial winners, to claim your prize, just send the following to Canon Marketing Philippines: Photocopy of a valid ID; Photocopy of the letter of notification; Photocopy of the original sales invoice; Photocopy of the winning stub. Upon verification, Canon Marketing Philippines will send the prize to the winner via door-to-door delivery or the prize may be personally claimed at the Canon Head Office.
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Canon

Analyze this: More US companies ditch forecasts

CHICAGO—It's time for Wall Street analysts to dig out the calculators, readjust those performance models and start crunching numbers again.

After years of spoon-fed corporate earnings projections—first with a wink and nod and more recently with formal forecasts from executive suites—analysts in some cases will have to, well, analyze companies and come up with their own forecasts.

Analysts and investors have come to depend on formal earnings projections to measure the financial health of companies. That's why recent decisions by several of Wall Street's bellwethers—including McDonald's Corp., Coca-Cola Co. and AT&T Corp.—to stop providing those estimates shocked market players.

"Analysts are going to once again have to do their jobs—forecast earnings and forecast cash flow based on analysis, not parroting the CFO or treasurer," said Manny Goldman, a California-based consumer products consultant who worked as a Wall Street analyst for 30 years.

No projections

Some companies are abandoning earnings projections because it frees them from the tyranny of having to meet short-term targets and instead focus on long-term strategies. In some cases, executives have been so compulsive about meeting short-term figures that they fraudulently manipulated numbers to reach targets.

"It allows (companies) to take a longer-term focus on where they want to guide the business and not necessarily (focus on) meeting a specific number that they have laid out on the table for the Wall Street investment community," said Tim Drake, consumer nondurable goods analyst at Banc One Investment Advisors. Drake follows Gillette Co., which stopped offering earnings guidance about two years ago.

Coca-Cola kicked off the latest trend last month by abandoning its long-standing practice of providing quarterly and annual forecasts. The world's No. 1 soft drink maker said the move did not reflect any deterioration in its business and noted that it was positioned for strong growth in 2003.

McDonald's also said it would no longer provide quarterly projections, and AT&T scrapped its quarterly and annual outlooks. Sun Microsystems earlier this month also said it would stop giving mid-quarter financial updates.

Other companies like General Electric Co. have started offering wider ranges for earnings estimates because times are so uncertain.

Bearers of bad news

Others, though, said the move illustrated the desire of some companies to steer clear of delivering bad news in a tough market environment. Goldman noted that some companies have not been very good at forecasting results, which he said probably contributed to their decisions to stop issuing outlooks.

"They would rather not say anything than be wrong again," Goldman said. "If they could (forecast), they would. But they can't." Giving formal projections became the norm during the tech boom in the mid-1990s. Rampant rumors on Wall Street about companies' upcoming earnings numbers led to Regulation Fair Disclosure, which prompted companies to broadcast expectations through outlooks and preannouncements to ensure analysts had equal access to information.

But some observers said the practice of issuing forecasts has stifled innovation and squelched risk-taking that helps companies grow in the long term.

"We look too closely at (short-term projections), and we don't look inside the organization at how they are being managed for the long term," said management consultant Mark Lipton, who studied more than 100 companies for his book "Guiding Growth."

Bill Steele, consumer products analyst at Banc of America Securities, said companies need to strike a balance between obsession with short-term targets and clamming up to the point of being inaccessible.

"At the end of the day, management should run their businesses and make the analysts do their jobs—knowing their industries cold and coming up with projections," he said.

Mood shift on Wall Street

Some consultants said Wall Street's seeming acceptance of the policy change illustrated a climate shift.

But that's primarily because industry leaders have gone out on a limb first in making the change, they said. Had smaller companies been the first to experiment with eliminating forecasts, they may have been ostracized as some companies have been in the past, they said.

"It used to be ... that if somebody had decided not to provide guidance, it would have been the kiss of death," said Ken Harris, a partner at consumer products consulting firm Cannondale Associates. *Reuters*

Stocks retreat dashes US investors' hopes

NEW YORK—A few months ago, many of financial planner Derek Hobbs' clients decided to plunge back into the stock market, believing the worst was over.

Now, their hopes of a rebound after three dismal years have been dashed once again after yet another fizzled rally this month slammed stocks back down to mid-October levels.

Perhaps even worse, they see little to cheer them elsewhere, with bonds producing only modest returns, money market fund yields lackluster and only some specialized areas like gold, which at most is only a small part of the average portfolio, showing strength.

"People now are fed up," said Hobbs, who is based in San Mateo, California. He has urged clients to keep adding money to stock mutual funds while keeping their expectations modest.

Stock market losses over the past few years have become commonplace—for both individual and professional investors.

Disheartened

But many people have continued to "buy on the dips," stepping in when stocks have been knocked down in hopes share prices will climb. The strategy was popular during the late 1990s when any stock setback seemed only momentary and big rallies would follow selloffs.

But it is an approach that hasn't worked lately. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 6 percent in the new year as of mid-January, leading many pundits to believe investors finally were embracing stocks again. But worries about a possible war with Iraq and the strength of corporate profits have erased those gains and left the Dow struggling with a 4 percent slide so far this year.

It's no wonder investors are disheartened as they see every attempted rally fade—but the ups and downs of the market show that people need to focus on buying solid companies, not just stocks they think are beaten up and poised for a quick jump, said James Huguet, president and co-chief executive of Great Companies LLC, a Clearwater, Florida money management company.

"It does wear you down. People see their net worth is less than what it was and they become really disenchanted with the stock market," he said. But, "basically what you've got to do is buy companies that you think are going to be terrific companies for the long term."

Losing faith

That approach isn't soothing many investors, however, whose portfolios are off to a rocky start to 2003. Just last week, investors yanked a net $3.1 billion from US stock mutual funds, research firm AMG Data Services estimates.

Hobbs described one client who seemed cocky a year ago but has since lost his confidence.

"I had one gentleman say to me, 'You know, I can take the down, but when the party starts, I want to be front and center in that party,'" Hobbs said. "But you know what? When things got really bad, the same person all of a sudden is rethinking that. He's real nervous about taking a maverick equity style and positioning instead into something different."

There are not many attractive options out there for investors, many of whom are stashing new money in conservative bond and money market funds. The weakening dollar and the uncertainty over Iraq have pushed the price of gold to new highs this year, but gold is typically only a small piece of an investor's holdings, and planners say it is too volatile to be a cornerstone of a portfolio.

Even stock sectors such as food, tobacco, and utilities that traditionally have been good defensive plays in a rough environment have provided little relief, said Patrick Becker, chair and chief investment officer of Becker Capital, a Portland, Oregon-based firm that manages about $1.7 billion.

Despite the early January rally when investors appeared to get back into the market, Becker said he sees little evidence individual investors are warming to stocks, saying people are staying on the sidelines as they warily monitor the Iraq situation and fret about the viability of corporate profits.

Instead, the stock market's recent zigs and zags are tied almost entirely to hedge fund and aggressive derivative trading, Becker said. *Reuters*

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Aries Espinosa, Editor

Hotdogs get better with Inulin Fiber

SOME hotdogs are now considered health foods following the incorporation of Inulin Fiber into favorite processed meats.

CDO-Foodsphere Inc. and Belgian firm Orafti Active Food has forged an agreement to integrate Inulin Fiber in the new CDO Bibbo! Hotdog.

Inulin Fiber is a high-grade ingredient made from chicory roots enriched with oligofructose. Research documents from Orafti showed that Inulin Fiber has been found out to increase calcium absorption, stimulates good internal function and energizes the body and the mind.

Chicory, a native plant in Europe, contains medicinal properties in the leaves and large taproot that act as tonic and laxative.

In most cases, it is extracted with the use of hot water , purification and spray drying. Chicory has 50-percent Inulin Fiber content.

Oligofructose comes from plant sources such as chicory and is resistant to starch. Chicory and oligofructose are found in most Asian foods like noodles, crackers and processed meat.

Following this breakthrough, food processors all over the world are now on the lookout for new applications of Inulin Fiber, marketed as Raftilose Synergy-1 by Orafti.

Raymond Koh, Orafti's sales manager for Southeast Asia, said Inulin Fiber is now widely used in processed foods on a global scale. Orafti is working with its partners to produce healthier foods which can be consumed as part of the normal diet.

Orafti is a leader in the marketing and production of prebiotic ingredients from chicory. Each year the company transforms more than 400,000 tons of chicory roots into inulin and oligofructose.

Based in Tienen, Belgium, the company operates in more than 70 countries with an annual turnover of Euro 200 million. Over the past 13 years, Orafti has invested more than Euro 110 million in the production of its ingredients.

According to Koh, the firm has increased its presence in Southeast Asia as it sees an emerging market for manufacturing-grade fibers.

There is a big market for nutritional food-based ingredients in the region because of the demand for better quality food," said Koh.

In the Philippines, Orafti has forged an agreement with CDO-Foodsphere, one of the key players in the meat processing industry, to integrate Inulin Fiber in its Bibbo! Hotdog.

"The result is the first hotdog food in the world enriched with high-grade fiber," said Koh.

Dr. Trinidad Trinidad, senior scientist of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, shares, "There are a lot of studies, especially in Europe and Japan, which show that Inulin has some health benefits."

CDO-Foodsphere vice president for sales and marketing Ed Reataza said CDO Bibbo! was introduced in the market to offer a hotdog beneficial to children for healthier growth.

The launch is a strong indication of the company's serious move to break into a product category long dominated by giant food conglomerates.

"Our effort to use Inulin Fiber runs parallel with our corporate mission of providing healthy, nutritious and cost-competitive food to the Filipino consumer," said Reataza, adding CDO has given emphasis on research and development to deliver a good product in the processed meat category.

The Bureau of Food and Drugs has accredited Inulin as a functional food and supplement.

THE CHICCO LIFESTYLE

Chicco toys and baby products are fast becoming every mom's choice for their babies. Its wide array of infant, toddler and pre-school toys boast of unquestionable quality and stylish designs distinctively Chicco. Its whole line of feeding bottles, clothes, shoes, health care items, playpens and stroller sets are most sought-after by moms. No wonder, then, that Chicco-Philippines was awarded recently as the Best Toy Distributor of the Year worldwide. Shown are, from left, Alberto Yao and Myrna T. Yao of Europlay Distributor Co. accepting the award from Chicco-Artsana International division representatives in Italy. Experience the Chicco lifestyle now. Chicco products are available at all leading department stores nationwide. Visit Chicco boutiques at SM City North Edsa, Festival Supermall, SM Megamall, Glorietta and the Podium.

Seminar on optimizing sales performance

IN KEEPING with global trends in professional selling and in view of the growing market competition for the Filipino's hard-earned peso, the Corporate Mind presents "Optimizing Sales Performance" on Feb. 3 and 6 from 1 to 6 p.m. at the Asian Institute of Management in Makati City. Topics are "New motivations in selling", Reaching decision-makers", "Diagnosing sales problems," "Making a difference to neutralize competition," The big role of quality preparation in successful selling," and "Building and maintaining a high sales output." Speaker is sales and negotiation consultant Joscephine Gomez, president of The Corporate Mind. The seminar-workshop is highly recommended for all sales professionals, business executives and even doctors, lawyers and accountants. For details, call 687-7898, or e-mail corpmind@edsamail.com.ph.

Revolutionary large format printing with Canon

WHEN it comes to large format printing, users mandate higher image quality yet with the fastest possible printout. As it is, an improvement in quality generally results in a loss of speed—and vice versa. At Canon, the vision is to meet these two technological challenges at the same time.

And that challenge has been met by Canon's wide selection of large format printers.

The core of Canon's latest original achievement is its MicroFine Droplet Technology—a result of high-precision manufacturing technology for the head and a completely new ink-firing system.

Canon's specialty expertise in semiconductor manufacturing, original materials, and innovative process technologies helped develop a high-precision wider head while maintaining a high 7,680-nozzle density.

The new ink-firing mechanism has the heater mounted on the end of each nozzle so the bubble fires ink straight down as opposed to horizontally. The result is consistently uniform, high-precision dot placement even at high speed.

The 36" W7200 and 24" W7250 professional spec large format printers are the peak of Canon's leading-edge print technologies. These printers have the new 1.07-inch, 7,680-nozzle high-density head—the pride of Canon Print Technology. You get exceptional speeds of up to 2 minutes Draft Mode, A0 size for the W7200, and 1.5-minute Draft Mode, A1 size for the W7250.

Handling media of up to 43 inches, the BJ-W9000 is just perfect for posters, banners, or large POPs. Printing a full-size poster in 6 colors at 1200 dpi takes an incredible seven minutes. Plus, you'll get features like a High-production Ink Tubing System that allows you to replace the inkbottles without interrupting your current printing job.

If you want reasonable pricing with superb features, you'll have both with the BJ-W3000 and BJ-W3050. It features Canon's Drop Modulation Technology that gives the sharpest lines and crispest images produced at the fastest speeds in its class. But more than outstanding printing quality, the BJ-W3000 and BJ-W3050 deliver complete satisfaction especially for professional requirements of architecture, engineering, plus construction and geographical information system (GIS) users.

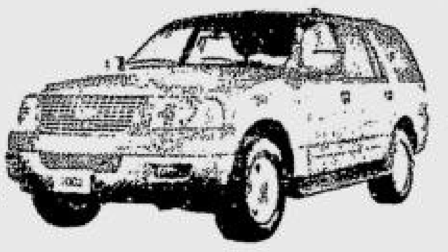
Bits 'n Clips

Executive lunch at Merk's starts

FINE dining or fast food? To give Makati's lunch crowd more choices, Merk's Bar Bistro will offer an Executive Lunch starting today, Feb. 3. Located at the 3rd level of Greenbelt 3, Merk's is a popular destination for live music entertainment in the evenings. The bar bistro, in fact, is also open for lunch and dinner. Lunch goers can choose from any of the three set choices for the Executive Lunch, a carefully planned complete meal at a reasonable price. Valued guests may still opt for the country dishes on the menu list. Merk's also accepts reservations for groups, lunch meetings and for special arrangements. Call 757-4720 and 757-4721 for reservations.

FIRST post-grad course

IN COMMEMORATION of its 25th anniversary, the First Integrated Residency Training (FIRST Inc.) Pediatric Program is holding its 3rd Post Graduate Course on Interdisciplinary Out-Patient Pediatrics. The FIRST Inc. is a consortium of the pediatrics departments of hospitals in the Mandaluyong-San Juan-Pasig area: Cardinal Santos Medical Center, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, The Medical City, and Victor R. Potenciano Medical Center. The post-graduate course, titled "A Simple Menu on a Silver Platter" presents reviews and updates on simple everyday pediatric problems encountered by practitioners in the out-patient setting. The course, boasting of foreign and local speakers, is being held today and Feb. 4 at Club Filipino, San Juan. For inquiries, call Drs. Cherry Ordinal or Eyreen Amoranto at 533-2086 or 531-4911 local 326/322.



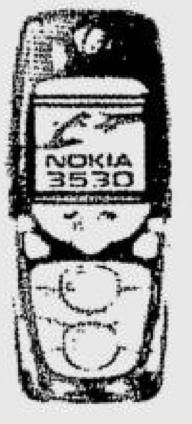
'WIN FOR THE FAMILY' RAFFLE PROMO AT SM

SM shoppers can win one of the two new 2003 Ford Expedition with SM's 'Win for the Family' raffle promo in cooperation with HSBC. Every P300 single or accumulated purchase made at SM department store entitle shoppers to a raffle coupon. The promotion is ongoing until April 6.

CLASP INDUCTION

The newly elected officers and members of the board of governors of the Citizens' Legal Aid Society of the Philippines (Clasp) were inducted into office last Jan. 16 by Senior Associate Justice Josue N. Bellosillo of the Supreme Court. Photo shows Bellosillo (extreme left) swearing in the inductees led by former Vice President Salvador H. Laurel (extreme left, first row), Clasp founder and chair emeritus. To Laurel's left are: House Deputy Speaker Raul M. Gonzales, chair; former Comelec chair Harriet Demetriou, president; lawyer Eduardo F. Hernandez, vice chair; lawyer Avelino V. Cruz, immediate past president and governor; lawyer Eduardo Ablaza, governor; lawyer Manuel A. Barcelona, governor; lawyer Ma. Paz S. Angeles, treasurer; and lawyer Augusto Almeda. In the second row (from left) are: lawyer Ramon M. Maronilla, executive vice president; former UP Law dean Froilan Bacungan, legal counsel; former Petron president Monico V. Jacob, governor; lawyer Jaime Portugal, governor; Ambassador Enrique P. Syquia, governor; lawyer Manuel G. Montecillo, governor; retired Sandiganbayan Justice Cipriano A. Del Rosario, governor and lawyer Garl M. Tongco, governor.

Smart offers the MMS-capable Nokia 3530 at a steal



Celfone aficionados will know pronto that the Nokia 3530 is synonymous with Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS), the ubiquitous buzzword of the moment, and one that will remain seeing how it is changing the way we work and play these days. What the internet did for computers, MMS is doing for celfones. It is the driving force behind the celfone's rapid evolution from a digital SMS-capable gizmo in the late 90's to a powerhouse of a communications tool in the new millennium.

Getting some MMS into your life now couldn't be easier and more affordable. Smart is offering the Nokia 3530 free of charge by signing up for its budget-friendly Gold Pick Plan 800. For this easy on the pocket plan, you get the MMS-enabled Nokia 3530's avant-garde design complete with colored screen and polyphonic ringtones. The days of dot matrix characters on a green backlight and ear-splitting monophonic ringtones are slowly becoming ancient history. What's more, you can apply for even lower plans and still get to own this highly desirable handset at minimal cost. Sign up for the Gold Standard Plan 600 and add just P2,000 for the phone while signing up for the Gold Rave Plan 500 entitles you to the same phone for only P3,000 extra.

Smart MMS is now leading the way in offering superior Multimedia Messaging Services to its subscribers. With Smart MMS Traffic Shots, subscribers can download digital snapshots of key traffic chokepoints in Metro Manila directly to their Nokia 3530 celfones. They can then enjoy the advantages of designing a traffic-free route, before even hitting the streets. Smart MMS Traffic Shots gives digital snapshots of key traffic areas across Metro Manila, all with the ease and convenience of the Nokia 3530 ergonomic keypad. Using the Nokia 3530, Smart MMS Traffic Shot can be accessed with just a few clicks. Say you're in a rush to make it to a luncheon in the area of Ayala Avenue and Buendia, you can be aware of how clogged the lanes might be by simply visiting the Smart WAP site, clicking on Traffic Shots and selecting the Ayala-Buendia link. An image of the current traffic situation will instantly appear on your screen.

And with the Nokia 3530, prepare to tune-in to incredibly faithful reproductions of your favorite songs. Receive calls that sound just how the artist intended you to hear them with Poly Tones on Smart MMS. Choose from Smart's wide array of polyphonic tones—from Movie and TV themes to Nursery Rhymes, OPM to Pop, New Wave to Soul. The selection is just so varied, you're sure to find one that fits your personality! Just visit the Smart WAP site and click on Poly Tones to download the Poly Tone of your choice.

You have until the end of March 2003 to make tracks to your nearest Smart Wireless Center and avail of this marvelous offer. That free Nokia 3530 is your visa to the limitless possibilities that await you in the wonderful world of MMS.

TANTOCO

DY-LIACCO

Was there really growth in '02?

From page C8

Yes because of substantial increases in our gross revenues and net income in 2002 over 2001.

Felipe Gozon, president and CEO of GMA Network.

Shopwise, supercenter

"Yes we did because what we offer are basic needs that are very resilient to any downturn. We experienced growth in terms of same store sales.

We believe this is because we are attuned to the consumers' needs and we are able to insulate ourselves from economic vicissitudes, uncertainties.

We also believe that we experienced growth because we are in the basics business, not in non-essentials; as an organization we try to adjust and adopt to the changing consumer preferences and we give the market what it wants."

Catherine Y.- Tantoco, VP for Merchandising, Rustan Supercenters Inc., owners of Shopwise

Optiline, exclusive distributors of Dolce & Gabanna eyewear

For the past months, sales have been down. People seem to have less purchasing power, prices of basic commodities are up; and the exchange rate is unstable

Marivic G. Lakhmani, owner

Image Dimensions, ad agency

No. Maybe (growth) largely agriculture driven figures

Louie Morales, chair of the agency

Fuentes Publicity Network Inc., PR agency of Citibank, MasterCard, Philips, Omega, Louis Vuitton

No. Budgets became smaller. But in fairness some clients' budgets grew. But definitely it was not the best year. For our firm, it was not really that bad, the problem is in collection. There was pressure among some retailers to hold on to their cash.

Edd Fuentes, owner

Asian Vision Cable Holdings, cable operator

We pretty much came close to the seven percent. Our organization has always been conservative and that has helped us the past few years.

Paco Magsaysay, president

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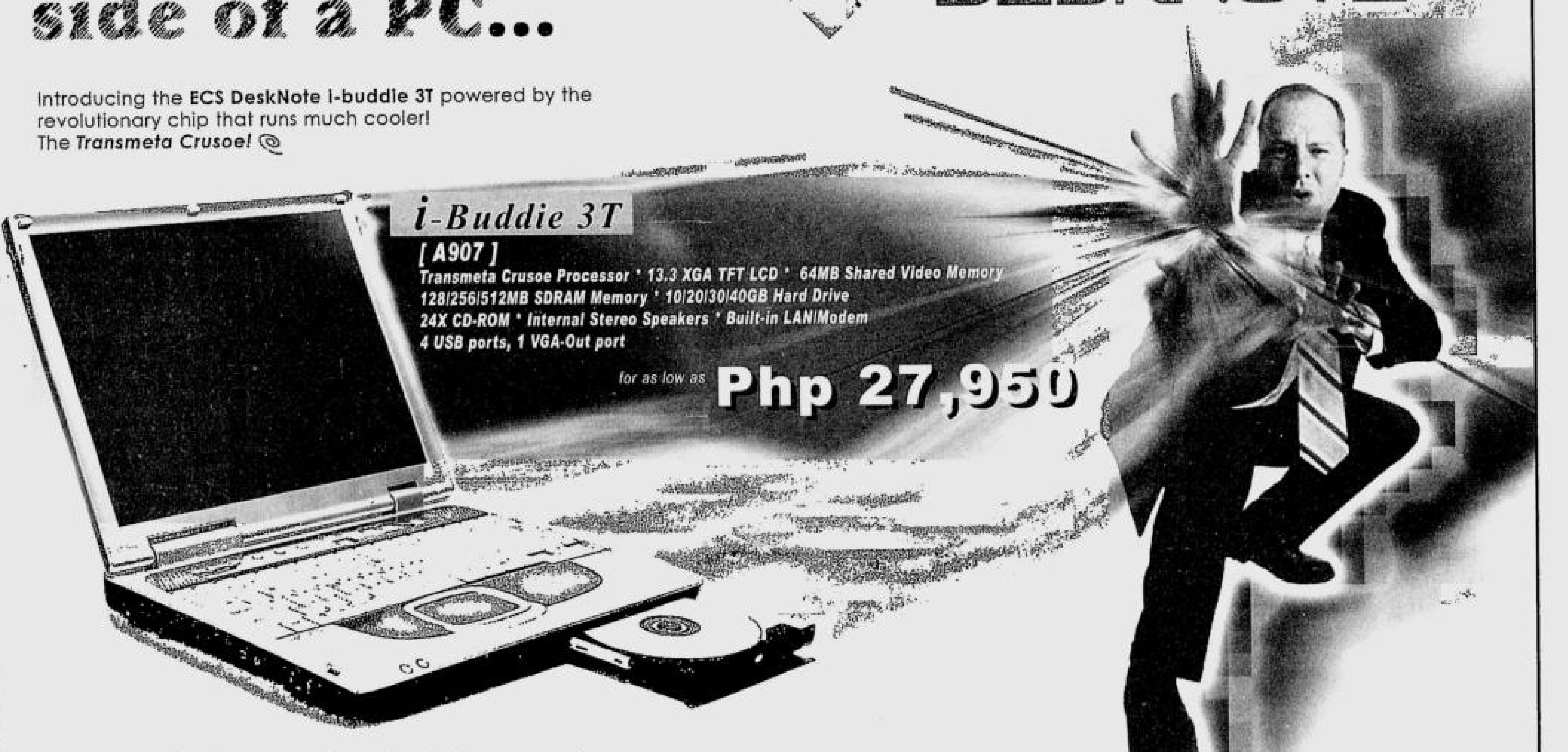

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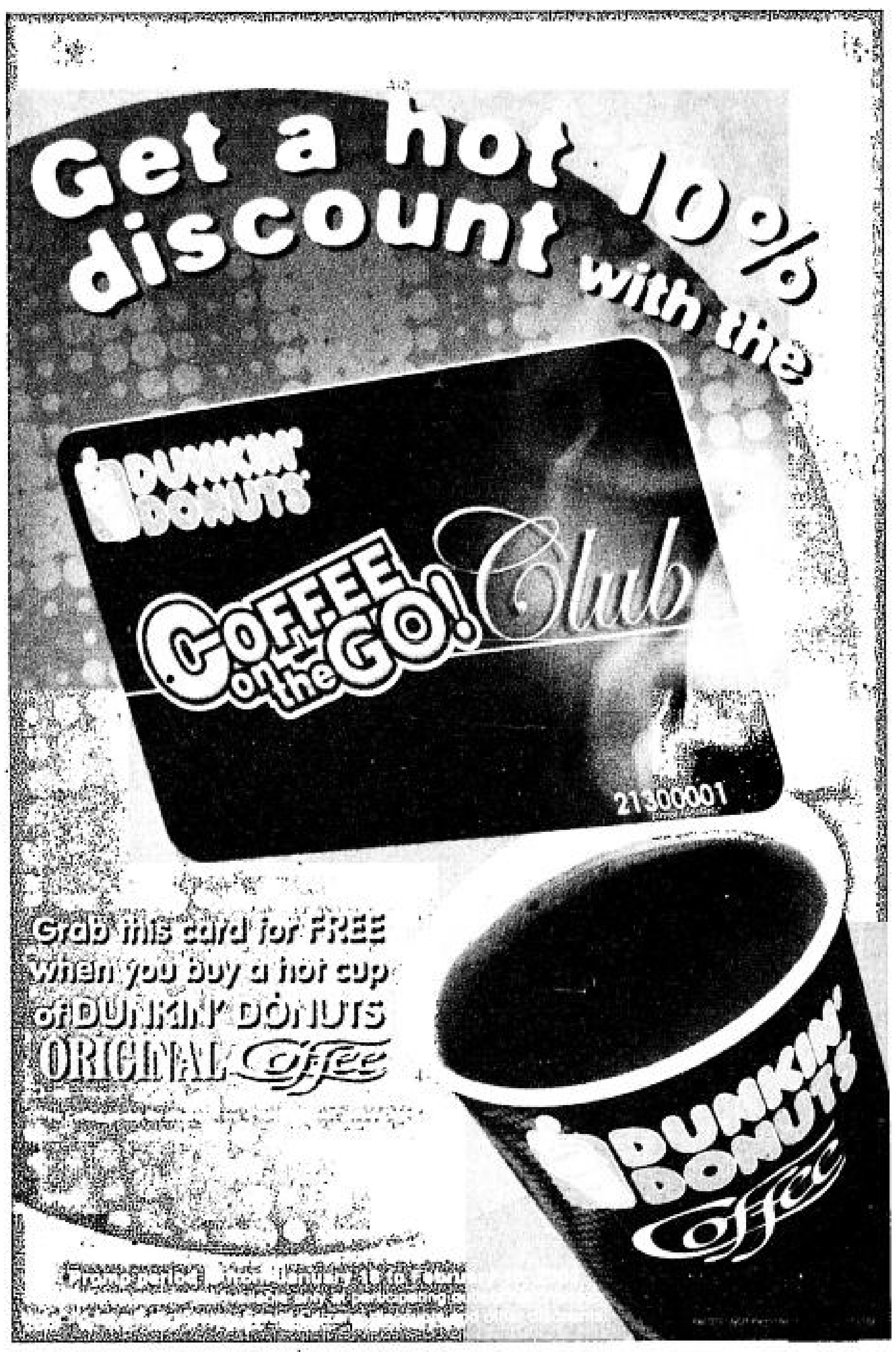
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Was there really growth in '02?

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

LAST Thursday, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo reported that the Philippine economy grew by 4.6 percent in 2002, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP). She said this is the highest growth the country achieved since the Asian financial crisis in 1997.

As expected criticisms hounded her report.

Business Monday asked a handful of businessmen—Did your company feel the economic growth GMA reported?

The answers are diverse and interesting:

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"Our business grew even greater than the economy, thanks to a resilient local market, despite very touch conditions, and to exports to neighboring countries. Our efforts at improving efficiencies, at state of the art technology and proprietary processes are showing very good results.

Pedro Dy-Liacco, director of communications, Nestle Phils. Inc

GMA Network Inc.

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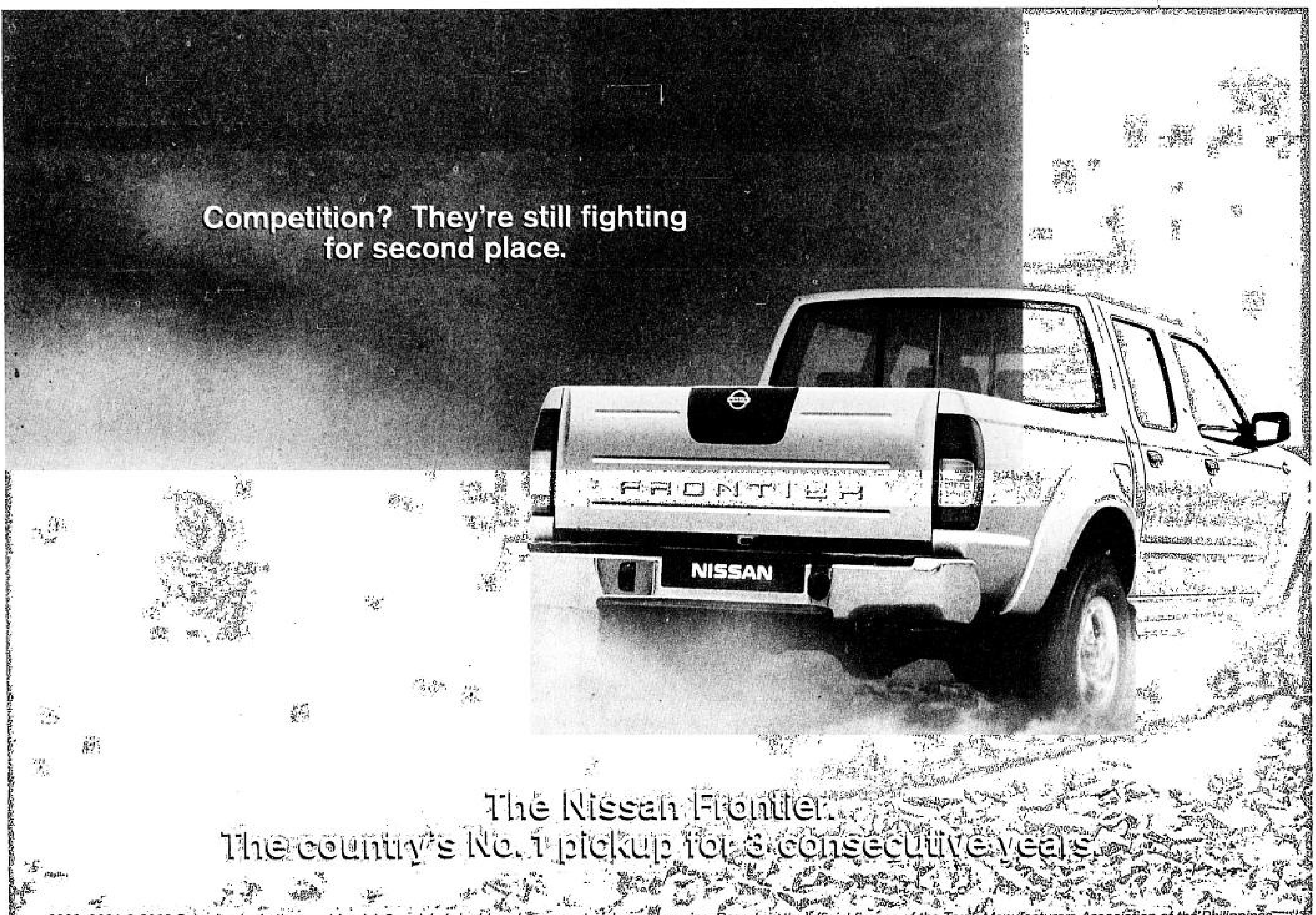
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DUNKIN' DONUTS
COFFEE on the GO!

HOMAGE TO KUROSAWA. Zhang pays tribute to the Japanese master in this shot

Zhang Yimou's lyrical violence and visual ravishment

The Chinese director goes for the opulent and spectacular in 'Hero' and outdoes himself

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JET Li is Nameless to Tony Leung's Broken Sword.

By Constantino C. Tejero

SELDOM have we held our breath for two seconds while watching a movie.

During the press screening of Zhang Yimou's latest, the martial-arts epic "Hero," we held our breath for stretches scene after scene. We haven't seen anything like it, even at this time of digital filmmaking.

Zhang—a leading light of the Fifth Generation of Chinese filmmakers, the first batch to graduate from the Beijing Film Academy following the Cultural Revolution—here returns to his opulent style after flirting with austere filmmaking in "The Road Home" and "Not One Less."

In three weeks, the film smashed the box-office record for tickets sold in China set by the Hollywood spectacle "Titanic."

Costing $31 million, this is the most expensive Chinese film ever made, twice costlier than Taiwanese filmmaker Ang Lee's Oscar winner

ZHANG/ D4

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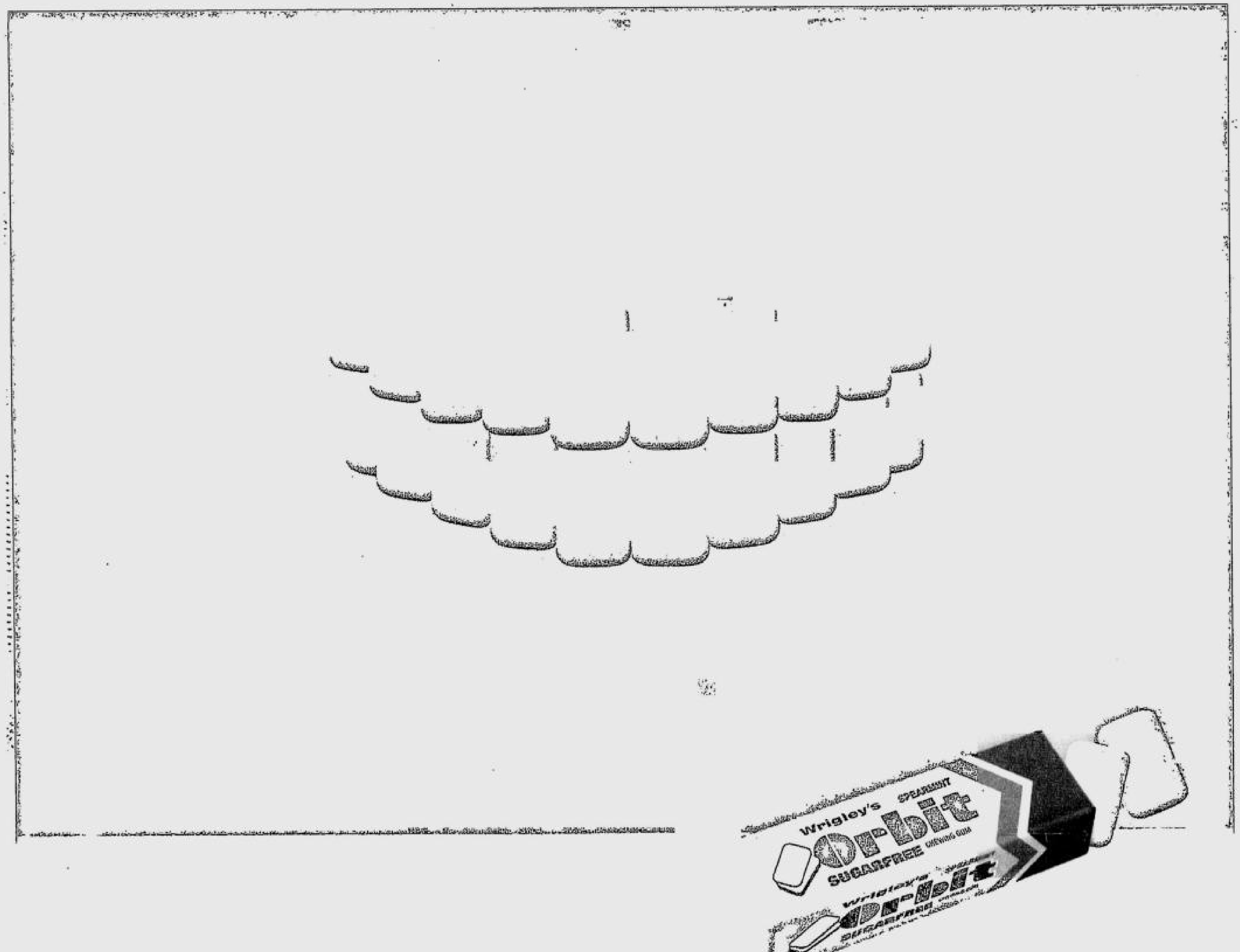

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Return of the natives

By Allison W. Lopez

A BALIKBAYAN, even with the twang and all, can really be more Filipino than the ones who stay behind jaded and blinded. They see what it is that we don't—a rich cultural heritage brimming with much promise—something we can be truly proud of.

With enriching experiences in tow, dance choreographers Alvin Erasga Tolentino and Kristin Jackson, stand-up comedian Rex Navarrete and Pinikpikan's Sammy Asuncion—all *balikbayans*—team up with Ballet Philippines (BP) in a celebration of cultures with "Balikbayan: Stirring Journeys of the Filipino Soul."

Thirty three-year-old Tolentino, who grew up in Caloocan and left when he was 12, says, "I wanted to go back to my roots. And I wanted to see how I can extend my vision, that's why I brought my work here."

"Balikbayan" is an innovative presentation of daring dance creations by Tolentino, a highly acclaimed Filipino-Canadian choreographer and dancer whose insightful, imaginative and hybrid dances have been featured and awarded all over the world; Jackson, a Philippine and Irish-American choreographer, dancer and teacher, whose choreography has been astounding audiences in New York, Boston and Manila; and BP's own Alden Lugnasin, whose dance creation "Aku" won him a silver medal in the Concours International de Danse de France.

Lugnasin, BP's associate artistic director, is not actually a *balikbayan* but is a brilliant choreographer from Samar. His "Buhay," a part of which was previewed during the press con, raged with fiery moves and intense energy to Pinikpikan's thumping ethnic music. Award-winning group Pinikpikan

Pinikpikan, Rex Navarrete and other 'balikbayan' artists collaborate with Ballet Philippines to bring 'Balikbayan,' a package of the Pinoy soul's journeys

FILIPINO-CANADIAN choreographer Alvin Tolentino wants to go back to his roots.

Awards and rave reviews for Philips Pixel Plus TV

PHILIPS Consumer Electronics, Europe's largest consumer electronics company, once again tops its record with the much lauded performance of its newest innovation: the ultra-high resolution Pixel Plus.

Pixel Plus bagged the top honors from the European Imaging and Sound Association (Eisa). Widely recognized as one of the most prestigious award giving bodies in the consumer electronics industry, Eisa recently named the Philips Pixel Plus TV the 'Best European TV' for the 2002-2003.

The Pixel Plus TV also received the distinction 'Television of the Year' for 2002. Media Total, one of Europe's top trade publications, awarded the citation.

This award-winning TV makes use of the latest TV technology developed by Philips. The innovative Pixel Plus technology incorporates impressive image processing improvements to bring incredible sharpness, natural detail and depth to the pictures onscreen, resulting in no less than a Resolution Revolution.

Apart from the awards, the Philips Pixel Plus TV also garnered praises from Europe's most respected publications, consistently topping the 'Best Buy' list of top trade magazines.

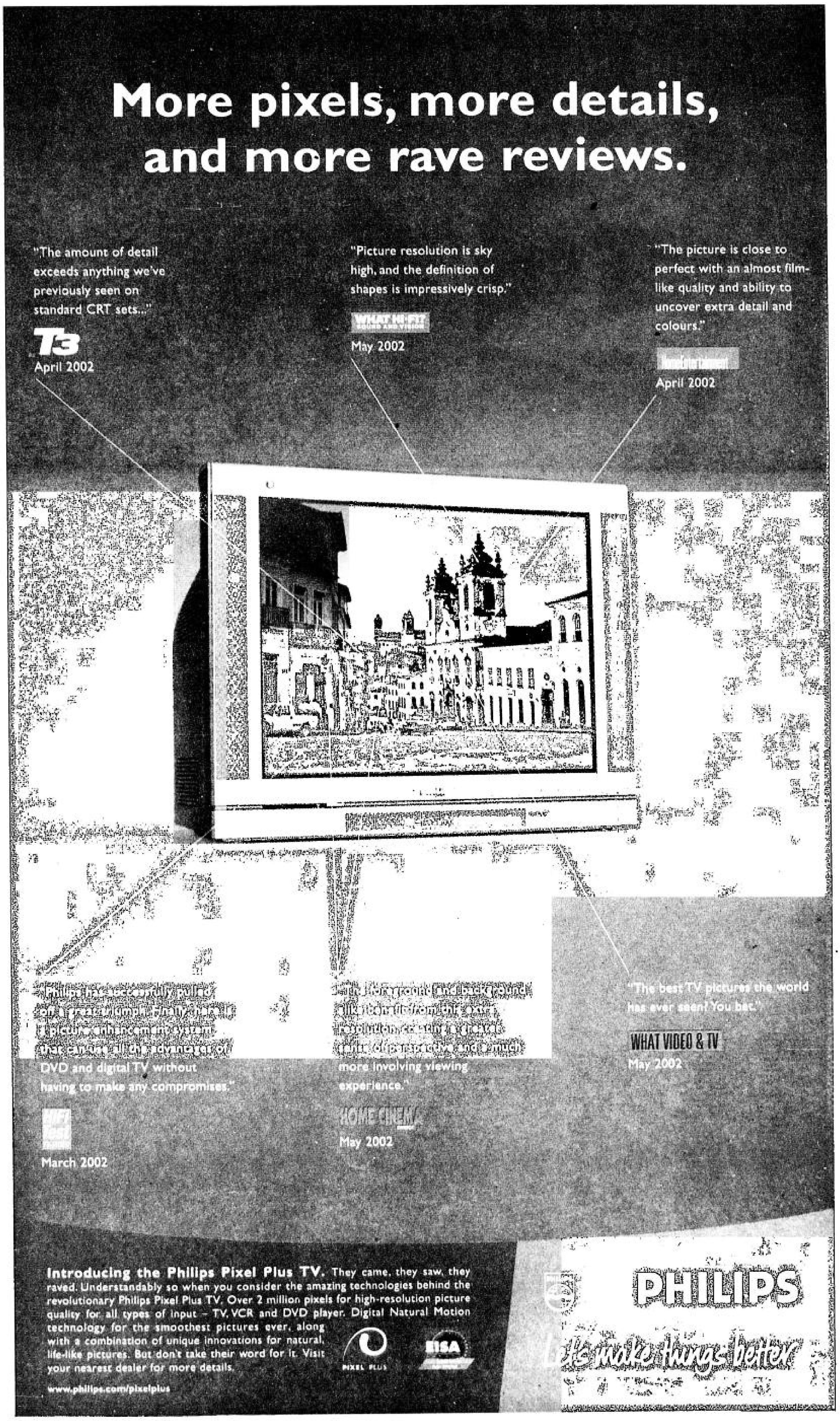
In the May 2002 issue of What Video & TV, Philips Pixel Plus TV was judged 'Best Buy', as "the picture this TV shows from every source is nothing short of stunning... the images look sharper, more detailed, and even more three dimensional than those we'd seen on any TV before."

The March 2002 issue of Hi-Fi Test also states, "The Pixel Plus technology catapults the Philips TV into instant superstardom," calling the result of this new technology multiplying the picture resolution " nothing short of the longed-for visual revelation."

Essential Home Cinema's Issue #12 notes how Pixel Plus works well with other Philips innovations, more notably the Digital Natural Motion (DNM), an advanced motion compensation technique that corrects the reproduction of movement in the picture. States the magazine "Together with DNM, Pixel Plus really enhances the appearance of fine line detail and overall clarity."

Widescreen TV also gave the Pixel Plus TV an all-around excellent rating, saying, "The Pixel Plus impact is immediate an gobsmacking...its extraordinary benefits are achieved with practically no side effects."

French trade magazine Cinema Chez Soi calls Philips Pixel Plus "A TV which stands out from the rest with remarkably clever technology. It ensures a fantastic picture...an undeniable winner."



More pixels, more details, and more rave reviews.

"The amount of detail exceeds anything we've previously seen on standard CRT sets..."
T3
April 2002

"Picture resolution is sky high, and the definition of shapes is impressively crisp."
WHAT HI-FI? SOUND AND VISION
May 2002

"The picture is close to perfect with an almost film-like quality and ability to uncover extra detail and colours."
Home Entertainment
April 2002

"Philips has successfully pulled off a great triumph. Finally there is a picture enhancement system that can use all the advantages of DVD and digital TV without having to make any compromises."
HI-FI TEST
March 2002

"The foreground and background alike benefit from the extra resolution, creating a greater sense of perspective and a much more involving viewing experience."
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May 2002

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WHAT VIDEO & TV
May 2002

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NOT JUST BALLET BODIES. Ballet Philippines' versatile and talented set in Alden Lugnasin's "Buhay"

is led by musical director Sammy Asuncion, who moved to France in 1983 and returned to stay for good in 1999.

"A Clearing," Jackson's solo work, was inspired by the Japanese Nóh performers' practice of washing the stage before their performances while Tolentino's "Field 1" will speak of the intimate relationship between the Filipinos and the rice fields.

"I want to show an abstract expression of the relationship between the Filipinos and their bloodline—which is tilling the rice fields. It's an integration of a people, their land and culture," says Tolentino.

And no, Navarrete will not don a tutu. However, his works, "Maritess and the Superfriends," "Mrs. Scott" and other comic materials on the quirks of the Pinoy, will be used in-between dances. Meanwhile, set designer Bogie Ruiz and video artist Tad Ermitano will provide the visual sensuousness through mixed media installations.

Ballet Philippines, CCP's resident dance company, is now on its 33rd season. BP has been consistently praised worldwide for yielding an impressive crop of dancers with remarkable technique and versatility in both classic and modern ballet.

"Our dancers have become more than just ballet bodies. They are now thinking bodies... we teach them not only ballet but other disciplines as well," says Denisa Reyes, BP's artistic director.

As part of BP's "Neo Filipino" series, Reyes says "Balikbayan" is "part of our vision to tap young choreographers and dancers to experiment and brave new things in dance."

"We [Filipinos] are very Western. It's our weakness, as well as our strength, because we're willing to explore and we are more open to alternative forms [of dance] unlike in other Asian countries," she says.

Next year's "Neo-Filipino" series offering will be "Metro Asia," with a powerhouse cast of choreographers from all over the region.

Dance is a universal language; hopefully, we'd learn to speak the same tongue these artists do—that of hope and pride—about being Pinoy.

"Balikbayan: Stirring Journeys of the Filipino Soul" will be shown at the Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino (CCP Little Theater) on Feb. 7, 8 and 9. Call 551-0221.

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More pixels, more details and more plus points

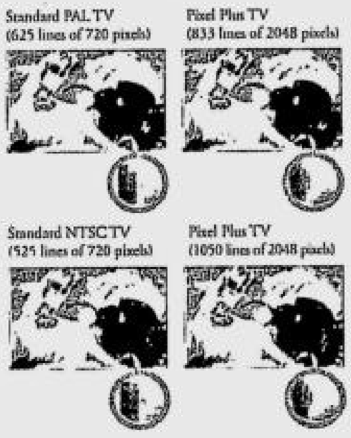
Just when you thought you've seen the best in TV picture quality, Philips introduces the Pixel Plus technology. A breakthrough that will change the way you look at detail. Pictures viewed on the Philips Pixel Plus are sharper and have more natural detail and resolution. Not to mention the other plus points: superior sound quality, user-friendly features and ease of connection.

"The best TV pictures the world has ever seen? You bet." – What Video & TV, May 2002 WHAT VIDEO & TV

2 million pixels for high-resolution picture quality

Why settle for less when you can have more? Pixel Plus improves horizontal and vertical resolution dramatically. To give you a better idea, when you are watching a DVD movie on a conventional TV (NTSC) there are 525 lines, with 720 pixels on each line displayed on every frame. Pixel Plus doubles the lines and increases the number of pixels to an astonishing 2 million pixels per frame. This gives amazingly sharp pictures with crisp and natural detail, which works for all types of input – normal TV, VCR and DVD.

"Picture resolution is sky high, and the definition of shapes is impressively crisp." – What Hi-Fi, May 2002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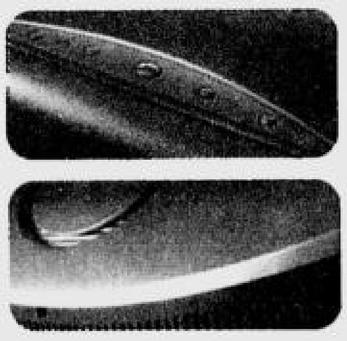

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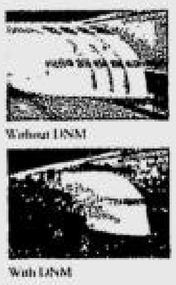
Digital Natural Motion

Philips' signature motion compensation technology, for flicker-free pictures. Digital Natural Motion eliminates the juddering effect that is noticeable when there are moving objects in the picture. It cleverly uses the fields in digital memory to estimate motion of objects in fields and creates new fields that are inserted between the existing frames with corrected motion positions of moving objects. More importantly, Digital Natural Motion technology relaxes your eyes.



100Hz Digital Scan

The ultra high resolution introduced by Pixel Plus comes without compromising field flicker. Pixel Plus combines the flicker free performance of 100Hz Digital Scan to ensure the most relaxing viewing experience.

Digital Crystal Clear

A combination of unique innovations that include Dynamic Contrast, Scavem, Digital Comb Filter, Colour Enhancement, Digital Noise Reduction, LTP-2, Colour Temperature Control and CTI. All focused on delivering the most natural life-like pictures ever.

"The foreground and background alike benefit from this extra resolution, creating a greater sense of perspective and a much more involving viewing experience." – Home Cinema Choice, May 2002 HOME CINEMA

Other Plus Points

Full Active Control

The Active Control is a pro-active system that analyses the input picture and automatically adjusts the picture setting (Contrast, Brightness, Colour, etc.) to the optimum.

Compass UI

Philips was one of the first to introduce Graphic User Interface to make interacting with your TV easier. The Compass UI eliminates all additional control bars and strips, so that you only have a single point of control.

Well Connected

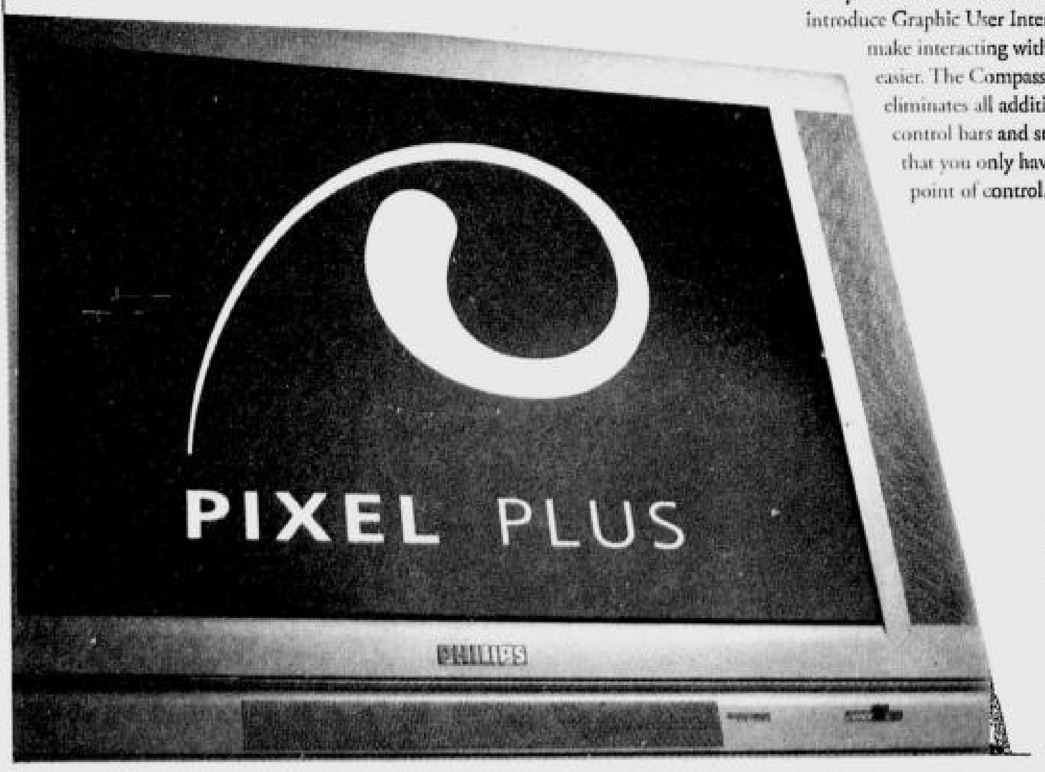
The Philips Pixel Plus has been designed with the future in mind. Apart from the latest connections below, it also has the capacity to handle future uses.

- HD Ready
- Progressive DVD input
- RGB Input
- DVD Component Input

Just Rewards

Not that the Pixel Plus needs proof of its quality, but it does hold the EISA Award for "Best European TV of the Year" for 2002/3. It's due reward to the designers and manufacturers of one of the most revolutionary TVs to date.

For more details on the amazing Pixel Plus visit your nearest retailer or log on to www.philips.com/pixelplus

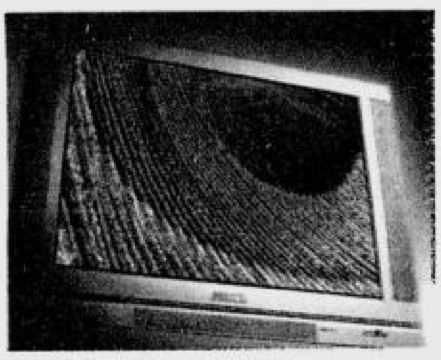


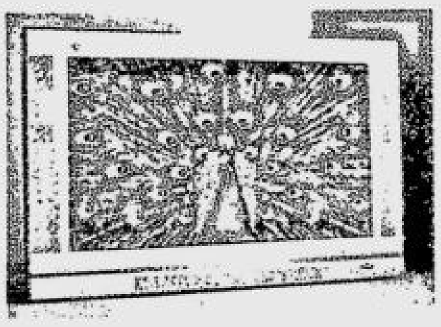
PHILIPS

The Pixel Plus TV is not only lauded for its image-enhancing abilities, but also for its superb audio capabilities. AV magazine's Hardware Test states "Philips has not only brought in new picture technology, but has also come up with a modern, sleek, new look. There's a completely new speaker system to go with this new design, giving a fabulous level of sound performance."

What Hi-Fi? Sound and Vision magazine sums up the Pixel Plus TV's sound performance by saying, "For a Dolby Digital equipped set, Philips does well; there's weight solidity and subtlety, plus precise effects-panning. Add it all up and this set is up with the class leaders when it comes to sound.

.Such distinctions and reviews show that Philips Pixel Plus delivers on its promise to provide the best viewing experience ever. By combining the best Philips in one package, Pixel Plus truly revolutionizes the TV industry.





Philip Pixel Plus is a Resolution Revolution, providing unparalleled sharpness and detail to every TV image.

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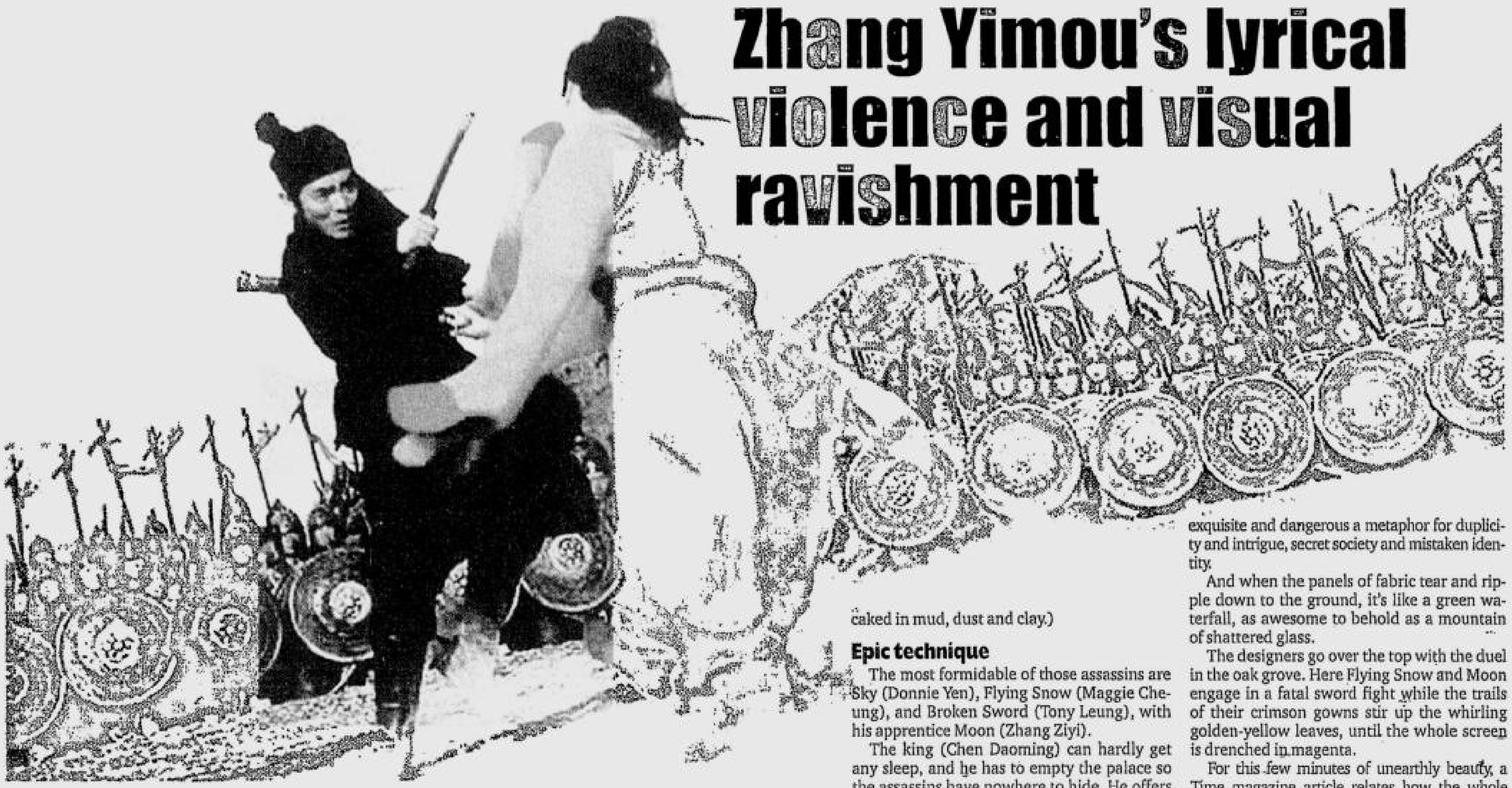
ADVT.

Zhang Yimou's lyrical violence and visual ravishment



ZHANG employs gore, spectacle and everything in the epic genre.

From page D1

"Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," to which it will inevitably be compared. Even then, it costs only about a fourth of what James Cameron spent for "Titanic."

But "Hero" is much, much more breathtaking than either of those two, shot per shot. Such color scheme and visuals as Zhang has concocted here we haven't seen even in Kurosawa or Bertolucci. (The closest we can recall is Antonioni.) It will literally take your breath away scene after scene after scene till you're blue in the face.

This is a legend from the Warring States Period. This is the story of the legendary warriors who plotted to assassinate the brutal but venerated king Qin Shihuang.

(He it was who later united China's seven kingdoms, burned all the books, buried alive the scholars, started building the Great Wall, and became the first emperor in 221 BC. His tomb in Xi'an is famed for its terra-cotta warriors and horses, to which the film alludes by having the troops of the king's mighty army caked in mud, dust and clay.)

Epic technique

The most formidable of those assassins are Sky (Donnie Yen), Flying Snow (Maggie Cheung), and Broken Sword (Tony Leung), with his apprentice Moon (Zhang Ziyi).

The king (Chen Daoming) can hardly get any sleep, and he has to empty the palace so the assassins have nowhere to hide. He offers gold and land to anyone who can stop them.

One man appears, Nameless (Jet Li), bearing the swords of the assassins. He gets an audience with the king, having earned the privilege to stand 10 paces away from him, and he tells his story, "Rashomon"-like, of how he destroyed the assassins.

True to his vision of what constitutes an epic, Zhang employs the classical technique of the genre: long narration, poetic language, portentous rhythm, in medias res, gore and spectacle, and especially largeness of spirit.

The film even evokes Homer and the "Mahabharata," as when it pauses and breaks in the course of the action, compacting or stretching time and space at will, to set the tempo, enhance the suspense, meditate.

In the Indian epic, the hero pauses from a duel and goes over to his mentor to get a word of advice, and this nugget of wisdom takes up several books of the epic, before the hero can go back to the arena to resume the duel.

In this film, in the middle of a rain-soaked duel, two antagonists stop to listen to a street musician pluck his strings, and they continue the sword fight in their minds.

In another duel on a green lake, where the antagonists whiz by like twin kingfishers skimming over the limpid water, one of them suddenly pauses and turns his back to his nemesis, proceeds to a pavilion in the middle of the lake where the corpse of his beloved is laid out, and wipes away a drop of water that has fallen on her cheek.

Those are moments of transcendence when the spirit is given prominence over the temporal and material.

AWESOME Hong Kong actor Tony Leung

Chinese superstars

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And when the panels of fabric tear and ripple down to the ground, it's like a green waterfall, as awesome to behold as a mountain of shattered glass.

The designers go over the top with the duel in the oak grove. Here Flying Snow and Moon engage in a fatal sword fight while the trails of their crimson gowns stir up the whirling golden-yellow leaves, until the whole screen is drenched in magenta.

For this few minutes of unearthly beauty, a Time magazine article relates how the whole company dropped everything and headed for an ancient oak grove in Inner Mongolia to shoot the scene at the height of the fall foliage.

Abiding vision

Zhang was implacable in abiding by his vision. Time reports he had a man posted specifically to keep an eye on the leaves, videotaping their progress as they turned from green to yellow, and he would call every day to check. As soon as half the leaves were golden, the crew rushed forth.

"We used three or four cameras simultaneously at different angles," recalls Zhang. "And the leaves had to be perfectly yellow. We even implemented a leaf classification system. Special-class leaves could be blown in the actors' faces, first-class in front of them, second-class behind them and third class were scattered on the ground."

A mat gathered the leaves as they fell, Time continues, so the crew could collect, clean and classify them, then gently send them drifting back down again.

Costuming was a different travail. Wada tried hand-dyeing about 30 colors, then found she couldn't make some colors with the dye and water in Beijing. So they had to import the dye from England and Japan and use mineral water to dye some of the fabrics. For the red costumes alone, they used 54 shades.

Each version of the story has a different color scheme: blood-red, icy blue, snow-white. All these are framed by the present reality of pitch-black, clayey brown and leaden gray. Here, color is context.

When Broken Sword recalls the first time he met Flying Snow, and how together they stormed the palace and confronted the king, the screen is awash in a vernal green.

When the two are sundered by passion and jealousy, the lovers not only smolder but the world also turns red (a carnal hue). Their apotheosis is set against the sky, naturally, in blinding white.

Poetic quality

Much of the film's lyrical quality comes from the poetic eye of cinematographer Christopher Doyle. As has been observed by one critic, Zhang, himself a former cinematographer, controlled the film's design but Doyle's imprint is indelible.

If Sven Nykvist was the closest to a recording angel Bergman could ever have, the Australian Doyle serves as well to a number of Chinese filmmakers from Zhang to Wong Karwai. In this film, he surpasses even himself.

If you were wowed by that famous shot in "The Matrix" tracing the trajectory of a bullet, here you'll be bowled over by a slow-mo of a sword point as it pierces a raindrop.

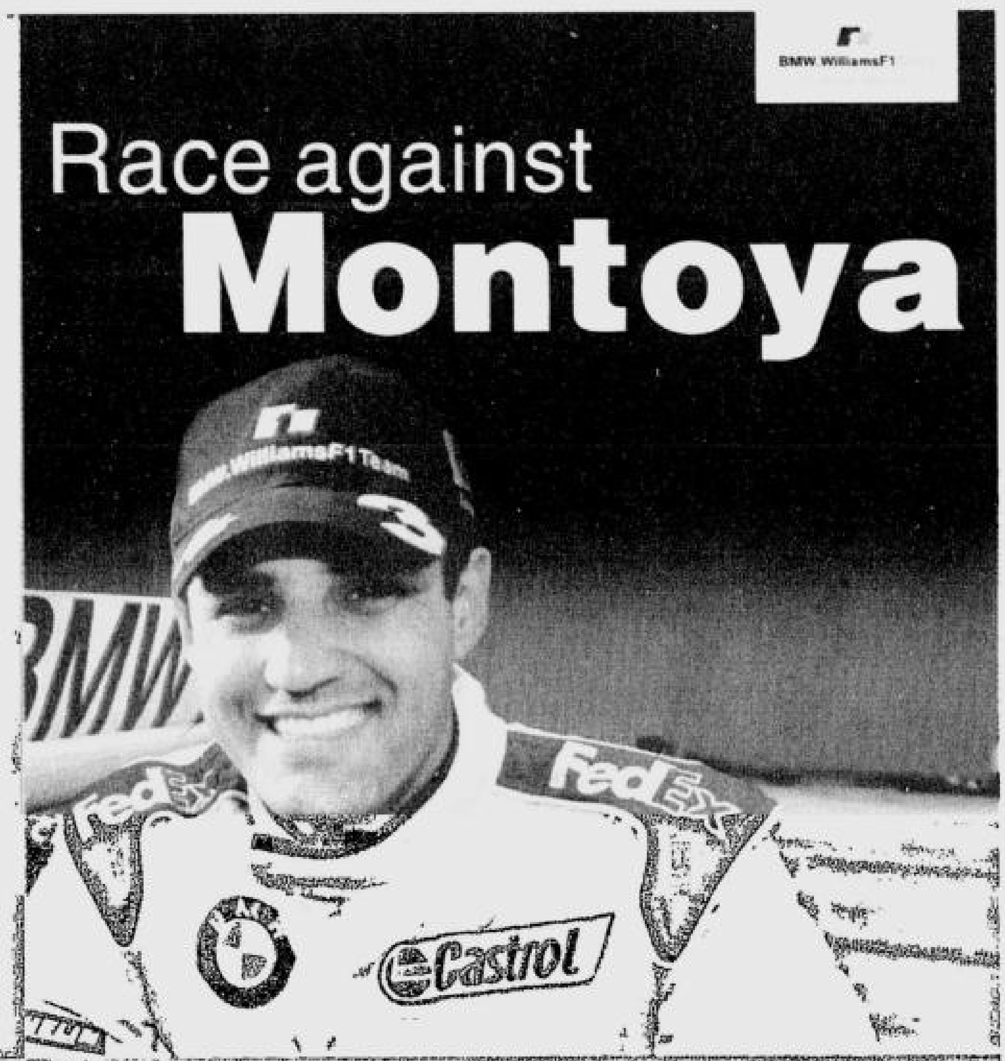
And witness the several instances when carnage is translated into lyrical violence. As in the noblest of Greek drama, the viewer is not allowed to see the wound—only a bead of blood drip-dropping from a blade.

Beyond the technique, however, it is the philosophy behind the story that shines through. More than a martial-arts movie, this is a meditation on warfare and culture (paralleled by the principles of calligraphy and swordsmanship), and on love and death, loyalty and betrayal.

This is, in fact, a subversion of the martial-arts genre. Whereas in previous such movies the constant theme is revenge, here it is the negation of violence.

A bit surprising for a filmmaker considered radical for his storytelling, the film's message is rather reactionary. This is a pacifist film calling for an end to suffering and bloodshed, a complete cessation of all wars, that all may live united under heaven.

MAGGIE Cheung



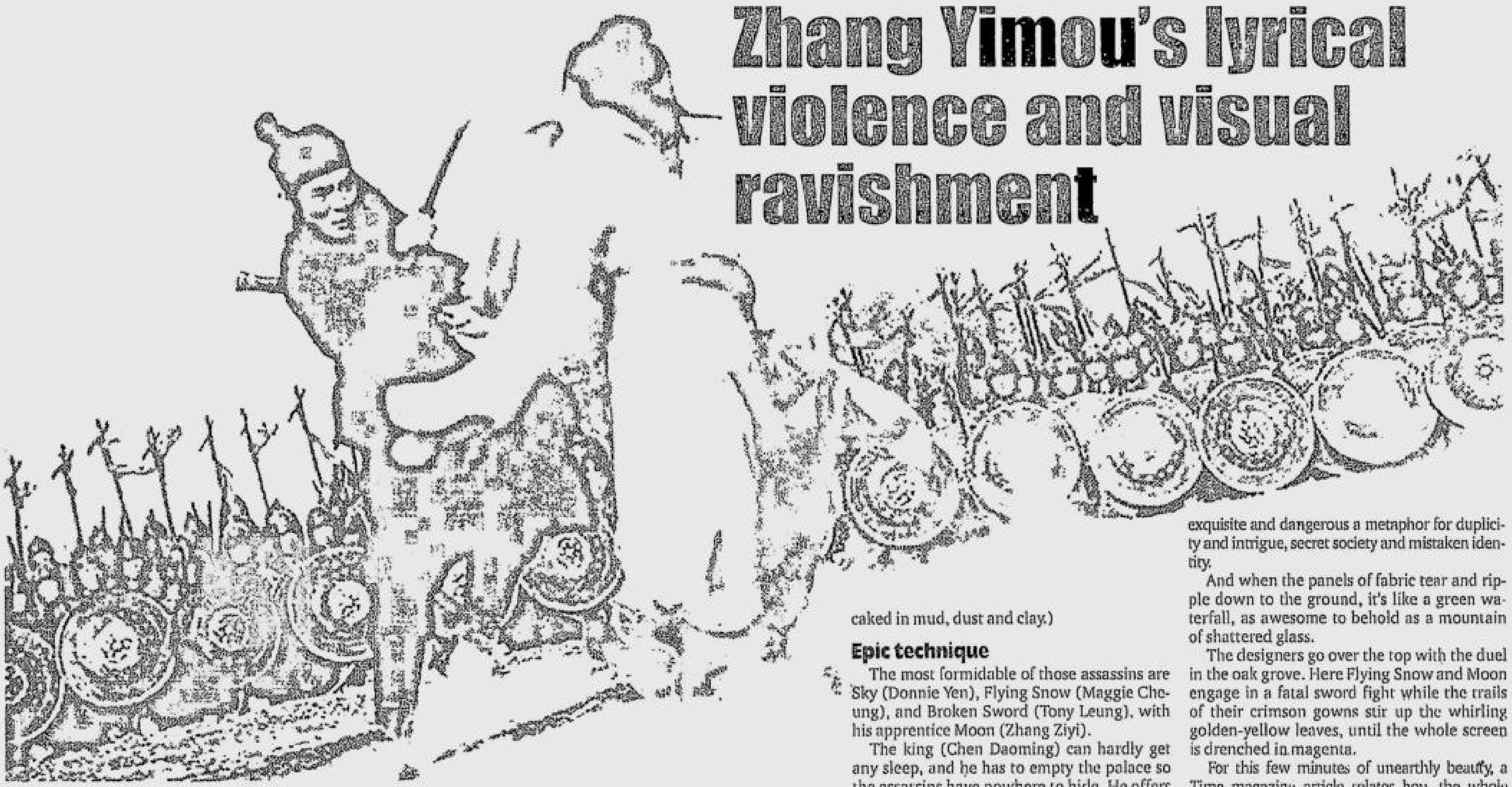
BMW WilliamsF1

Race against Montoya

[illegible]

Castrol

Zhang Yimou's lyrical violence and visual ravishment



ZHANG employs gore, spectacle and everything in the epic genre.

age D1

'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," to which will inevitably be compared. Even then, it costs only about a fourth of what James Cameron spent for "Titanic."

But "Hero" is much, much more breathtaking than either of those two, shot per shot. Such color scheme and visuals as Zhang has concocted here we haven't seen even in Kurosawa or Bertolucci. (The closest we can recall is Antonioni.) It will literally take your breath away scene after scene after scene till you're blue in the face.

This is [illegible] legend from the Warring States Period. This is the story of the legendary warriors who plotted to assassinate the brutal but venerated king Qin Shihuang.

(He it was who later united China's seven kingdoms, burned all the books, buried alive the scholars, started building the Great Wall, and became the first emperor in 221 BC. His tomb in Xi'an is famed for its terra-cotta warriors and horses, to which the film alludes by having the troops of the king's mighty army caked in mud, dust and clay.)

Epic technique

The most formidable of those assassins are Sky (Donnie Yen), Flying Snow (Maggie Cheung), and Broken Sword (Tony Leung), with his apprentice Moon (Zhang Ziyi).

The king (Chen Daoming) can hardly get any sleep, and he has to empty the palace so the assassins have nowhere to hide. He offers gold and land to anyone who can stop them.

One man appears, Nameless (Jet Li), bearing the swords of the assassins. He gets an audience with the king, having earned the privilege to stand 10 paces away from him, and he tells his story, "Rashomon"-like, of how he destroyed the assassins.

True to his vision of what constitutes an epic, Zhang employs the classical technique of the genre: long narration, poetic language, portentous rhythm, in medias res, gore and spectacle, and especially largeness of spirit.

The film even evokes Homer and the "Mahabharata," as when it pauses and breaks in the course of the action, compacting or stretching time and space at will, to set the tempo, enhance the suspense, meditate.

In the Indian epic, the hero pauses from a duel and goes over to his mentor to get a word of advice, and this nugget of wisdom takes up several books of the epic, before the hero can go back to the arena to resume the duel.

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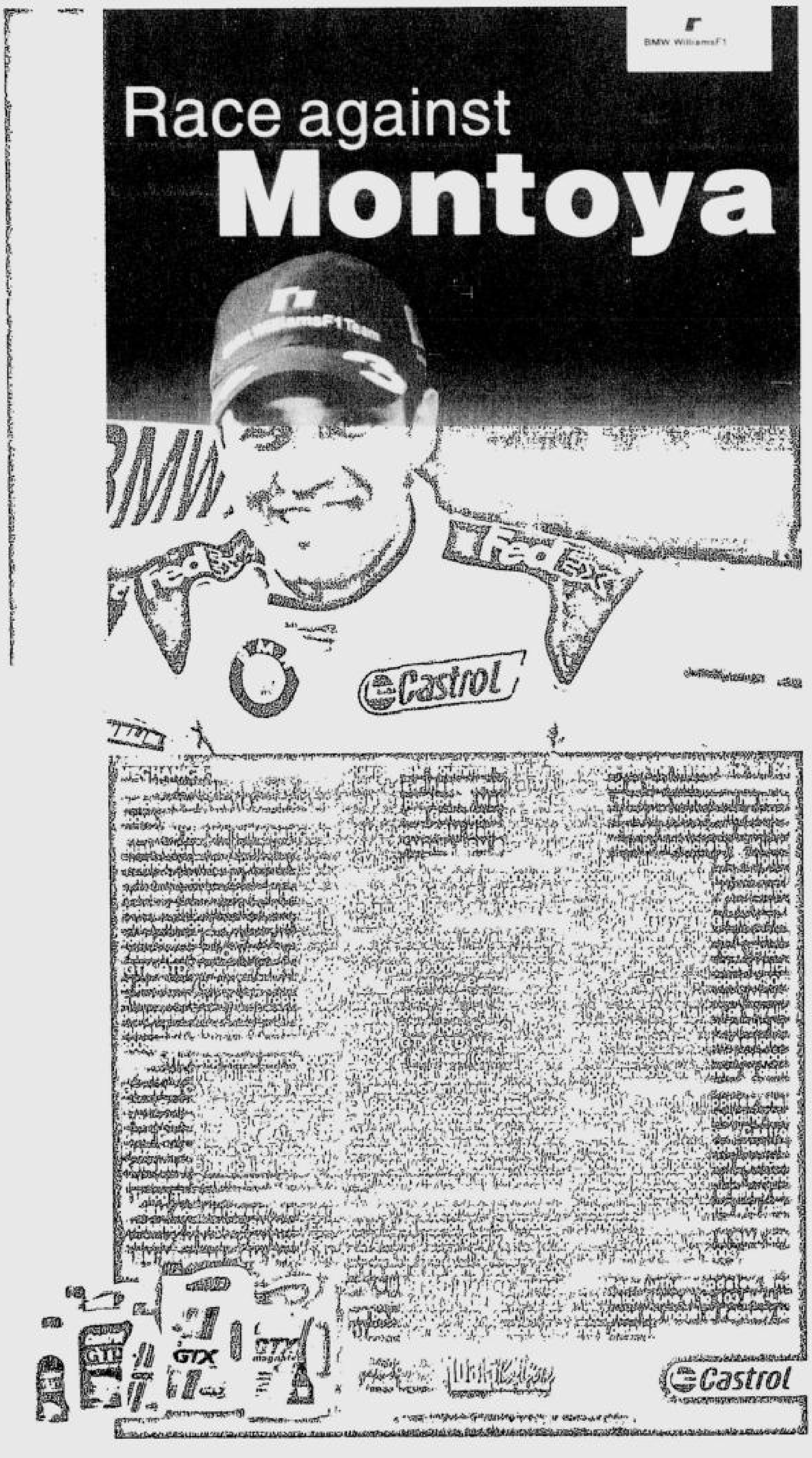

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TOWN brass bands make their pitch.

MULTI-ART approach to culture

The rainbow connection

2003 Arts Month across the nation

Antique, Bacolod and Iloilo

To be held on Feb. 14-21 is "Dila-Ambong: Literary Performances of Western Visayas Literature," an oral-aural-visual presentation of genres of Western Visayas literature. The reading and performance tour will use select literary pieces in Hiligaynon, Kiniray-a, English, Aklanon and Filipino. Participating writers include Rodolfo Boy Cabado, Zenaida B. French, Felino S. Garcia, Alice Tan-Gonzales, Peter Nery, Alex de los Santos, John Barrios, John Teodoro, Mel Cichon, Mel Turao, Jonathan Jurilla, Alain Dimson, Santiago Mulato, Agnes Españo, Isidoro Cruz, John Hingco and Leoncio Deriada.

Cagayan de Oro City

The Liceo de Cagayan University Cagayan de Oro City presents "The Legend of Cagayan de Oro," a two-hour repertoire of ethnic dances depicting the beautiful romance of Bailawanen and Bagani, on Feb. 7, 9, 14, 21, 28.

Camarines Norte

"Lidong ng Kabihug: Pagkilala at Pagpapakilala sa Paniniwala ng mga Katutubo sa Camarines Norte" is a traveling multimedia exhibit of the ritual and celebration of the Kabihug tribe for their bereaved. It is divided into five major sections: the daily life of the Kabihugs, the preparations for the Lidong (prayers and wishes for the dead), the *sakdo* (food-offering), and the Lidong. The exhibit will include a *butukan* house of the Kabihugs, bamboo benches, write-ups, audio tapes and video footages of the *sakdo* and dance in remembrance of the dead.

Calbayog City, Samar

"Suba Pairaya, Suba Pailuod (Pagtuitol sa Magkalain-Lain nga mga Dalan)" is a month-long celebration consisting of Kalanrakas/Bandilyo, Pagpagikan (performances of the Hadang), Makabugwas (live diorama), competitions on guitar solo, Siday and Sabayang Bigkas, museum exhibits and lectures, Lamiraw san mga Dalan

2003 ARTS/ E4

By Lito B. Zulueta

DIVERSITY, not division. That seems to be the clarion call of this year's National Arts Month organized by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). The celebration, which is mandated by a proclamation of President Corazon Aquino in 1991, promises to be more extensive, more colorful, and better represented regionally.

Blame it on the NCCA's need to make up for lost time. The commission had suffered unfortunate leadership troubles and a rather tight budget situation early last year, resulting in near paralysis of NCCA programs and projects.

But since President Macapagal-Arroyo spoke before the cultural summit last June, making cutting remarks on the alleged elitism of certain sectors of the arts and culture regime, the situation has improved. Programs and projects have been pursued with new determination and optimism, and even historically grumpy members of the different committees under the four subcommissions have started to express grudging comments that things "seem" to be moving faster nowadays. It is as if the President had forced the cultural establishment to listen to her speak her mind before giving the go-signal to reward it for bearing with her.

Perhaps taking the cue from the President, Tourism Undersecretary Evelyn Pantig, chair of the NCCA, said this year's Arts Month is a "celebration of diversity," showing the breadth and scale of Philippine arts and culture. The focus is summed up in the theme, "Bahagharing Kalinangan," a celebration of the many varied colors of culture.

In addition, according to Maria Fina Yonzon, NCCA executive director, the celebration is "multi-art and multidisciplinary." "We have intertwined art disciplines," she said.

The celebration promises to be bigger. Last year, according to Pantig, some 800,000 students and teachers were provided assistance by the NCCA to watch cultural shows. Yonzon said the number could be bigger this year.

Several activities will last the entire month: among them Kulturang Kalye 2003, a cultural festival featuring a great number of artists, writers, performers, musicians and cultural workers in a wide range of events reflective of the multi-faceted character of Philippine culture. This is a series of street events (on Feb. 1, 8, 15, 22, 23) that enlists the participation of artists from music and art, featuring a wide array of musical genres, including classical, jazz, rock, bar/lounge, folk opera, symphony and chamber music. Ballet and theater companies are also involved, along with generations of visual and literary artists of all styles.

Also playing the whole month is "Uyayi ng Dalampasigan" in

THE RAINBOW/ E4

> This year's National Arts Month may yet show that the arts and culture regime is coming together

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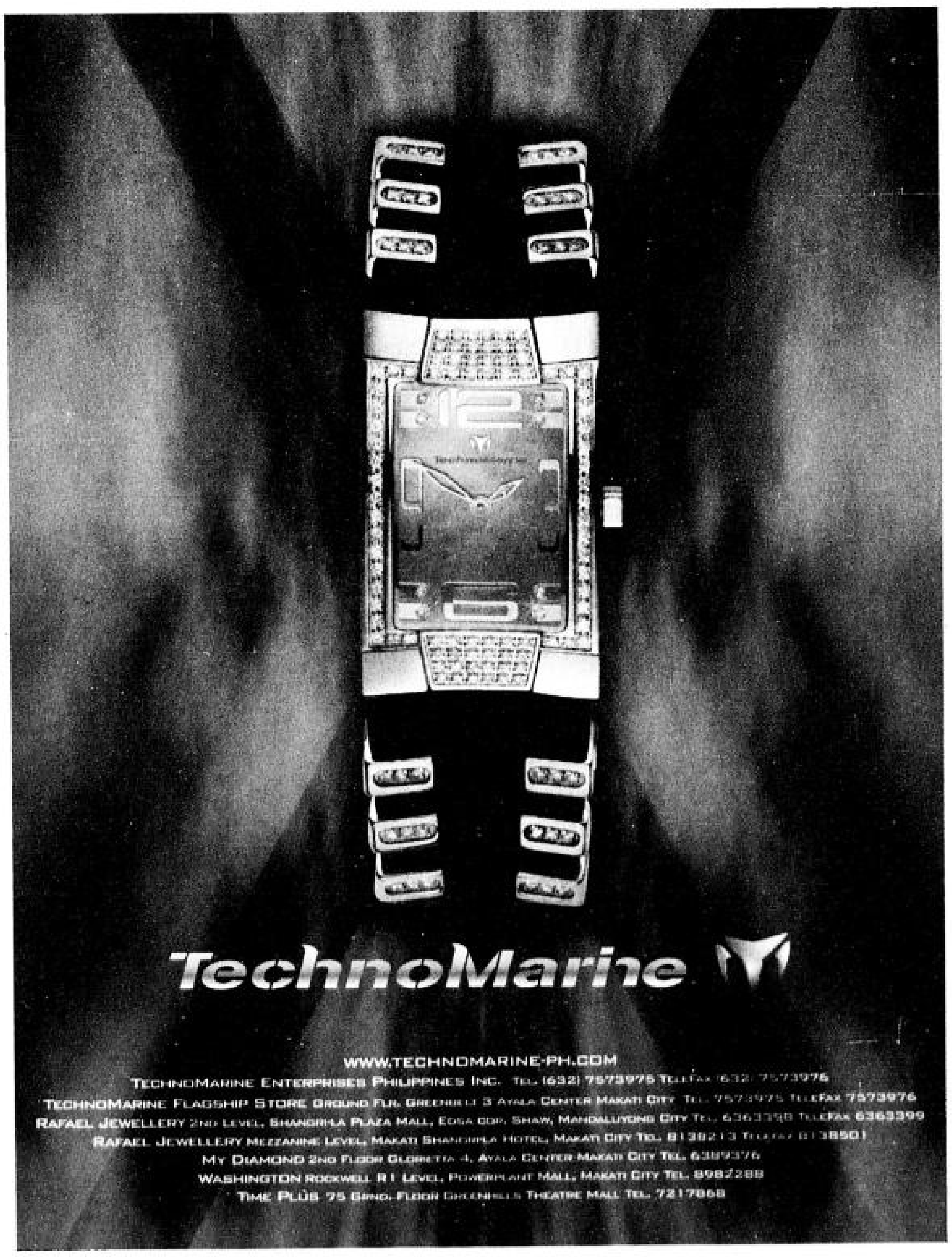
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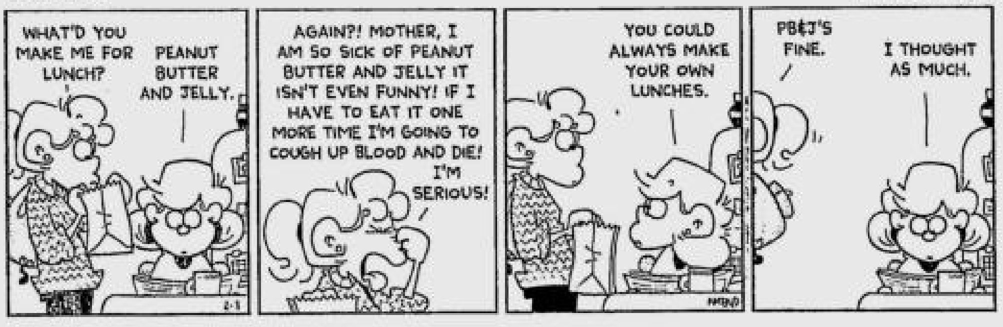
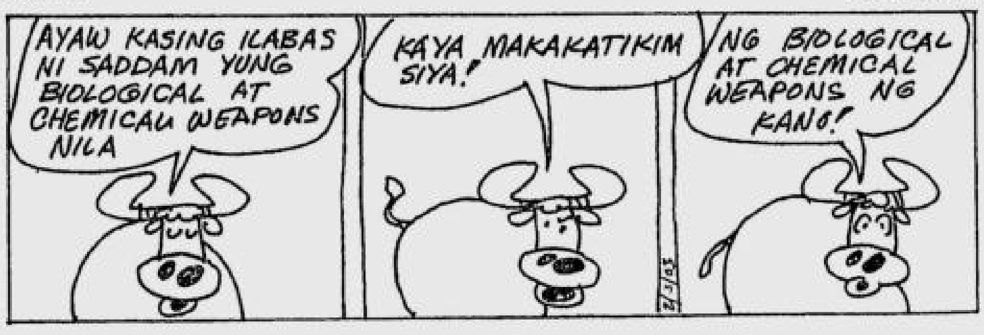
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT'D YOU MAKE ME FOR LUNCH?
PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY.
AGAIN?! MOTHER, I AM SO SICK OF PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY IT ISN'T EVEN FUNNY! IF I HAVE TO EAT IT ONE MORE TIME I'M GOING TO COUGH UP BLOOD AND DIE! I'M SERIOUS!
YOU COULD ALWAYS MAKE YOUR OWN LUNCHES.
PB&J'S FINE.
I THOUGHT AS MUCH.

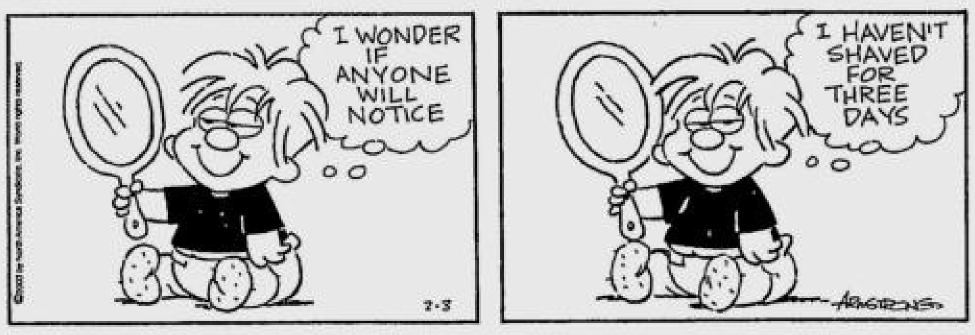
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


AYAW KASING ILABAS NI SADDAM YUNG BIOLOGICAL AT CHEMICAL WEAPONS NILA
KAYA MAKAKATIKIM SIYA!
NG BIOLOGICAL AT CHEMICAL WEAPONS NG KANO!
2/3/03

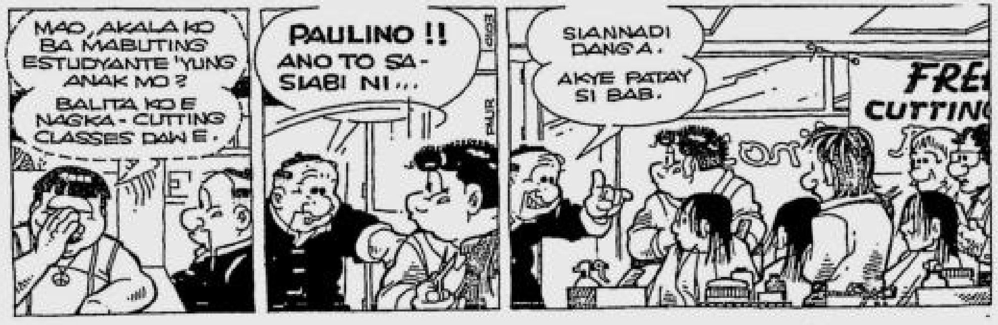
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I WONDER IF ANYONE WILL NOTICE
I HAVEN'T SHAVED FOR THREE DAYS
2-3
ARMSTRONG

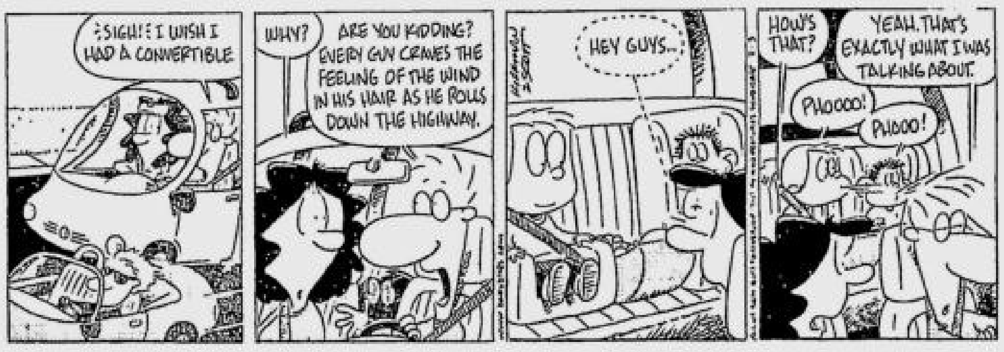
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAO, AKALA KO BA MABUTING ESTUDYANTE 'YUNG ANAK MO?
BALITA KO E NAGKA-CUTTING CLASSES DAW E.
PAULINO !! ANO TO SASABI NI...
SIANNADI DANG'A.
AKYE PATAY SI BAB.
FRE
CUTTIN

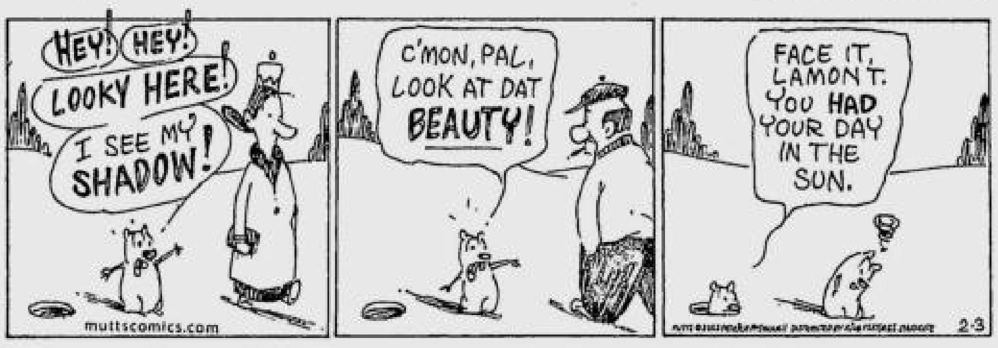
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


SIGH! I WISH I HAD A CONVERTIBLE.
WHY?
ARE YOU KIDDING? EVERY GUY CRAVES THE FEELING OF THE WIND IN HIS HAIR AS HE ROLLS DOWN THE HIGHWAY.
HEY GUYS...
HOW'S THAT?
YEAH. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I WAS TALKING ABOUT.
PHOOOO!
PHOOO!

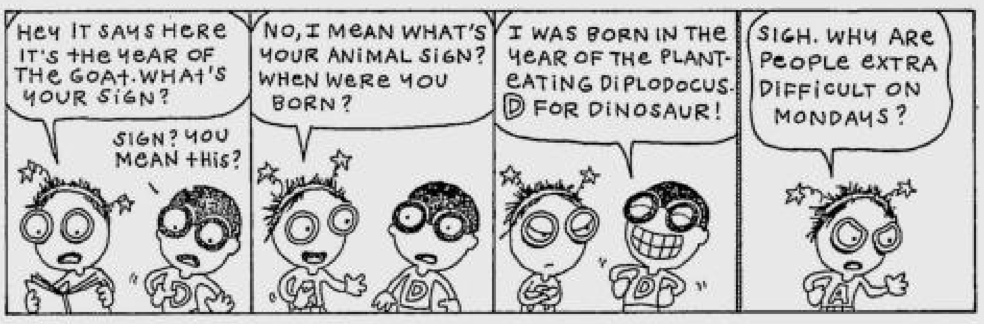
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HEY! HEY! LOOKY HERE! I SEE MY SHADOW!
C'MON, PAL, LOOK AT DAT BEAUTY!
FACE IT, LAMONT. YOU HAD YOUR DAY IN THE SUN.
muttscomics.com
2-3

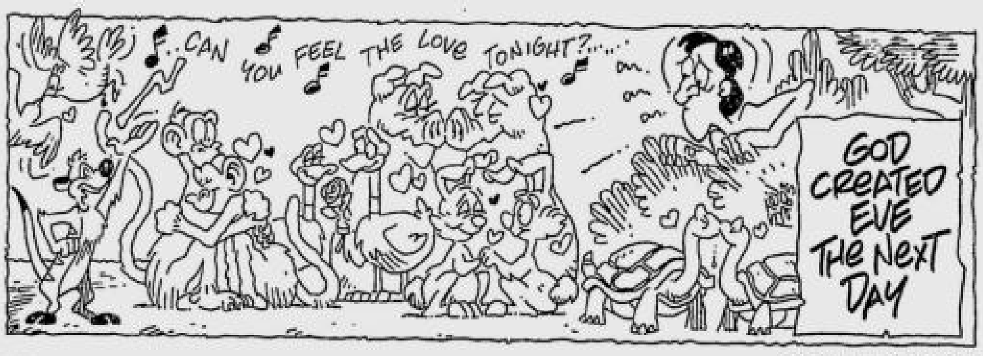
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HEY IT SAYS HERE IT'S THE YEAR OF THE GOAT. WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?
SIGN? YOU MEAN THIS?
NO, I MEAN WHAT'S YOUR ANIMAL SIGN? WHEN WERE YOU BORN?
I WAS BORN IN THE YEAR OF THE PLANT-EATING DIPLODOCUS. D FOR DINOSAUR!
SIGH. WHY ARE PEOPLE EXTRA DIFFICULT ON MONDAYS?

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


..CAN YOU FEEL THE LOVE TONIGHT?.....
on.
on
on
GOD CREATED EVE THE NEXT DAY

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Fran Tarkenton, James Michener, Morgan Fairchild, Blythe Danner

Happy Birthday: No one is likely to surpass your fortitude, willpower and high-energy approach as you strive for results. You will dazzle those watching from the sidelines as you maneuver yourself into a key position. Your numbers are 1, 5, 13, 17, 22, 39

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You should focus on doing the best job you can to avoid any hassle. Work hard so that you will have some free time later in the week to relax.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Partnerships will be hot. Others will be impressed with your efficiency and appreciate what you are able to accomplish in a short time.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): A rising temper will only cause trouble when working with a group. Keep your feelings to yourself. Don't be misguided by people who enjoy making life difficult for others.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): People from your past may try to get back into your favor. Don't be too forgiving; you shouldn't be moving backward. Experiences should make you wiser.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Money is coming your way, so keep your eyes open and take advantage of it. Make a valuable purchase, but also put something away for an unexpected expense.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Travel will lead to all sorts of exciting things. Romance should be high on your list, but don't be too eager. An aloof approach will be far more enticing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Don't worry if your personal life is not going according to your desires. Put your time and energy into your professional moves. It will make you far more attractive.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You need to create a diversion for yourself so you don't dwell on your troubles. Getting involved in sports activities will help relieve the tension you've been experiencing.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Your problems are escalating today and you either have to distance yourself from the situation or face your dilemma head-on. Seek legal advice if you think you may need it.

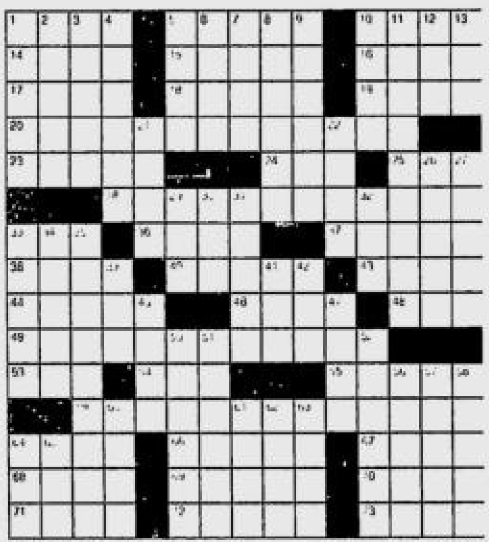
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You will meet new people or even a potential partner if you attend a social gathering. Don't waffle if someone has a different agenda or plan. Stick to what suits you best.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You are quick to come up with some great ideas that could result in a cash injection. Don't hold back because of your own lack of self-confidence. It's time you started to believe in yourself.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Your active imagination may take over today, leading you in many directions. Don't be led astray by bizarre ideas. Strive to learn about different cultures and traditions.

Birthday Baby: Your curiosity will lead you into all sorts of unusual experiences throughout your life. You will be daring, quick to try new things and always in the center of whatever is happening. You will be ingenious when it comes to finding solutions

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR
2/3/03

ACROSS
1 Gradual
5 Classic violin
10 Son of Eliel Saarinen
14 Director Wertmuller
15 Altercation
16 Go a round with?
17 List-shortening abbr
18 Popped the question
19 Questionable contraction?
20 Benevolent
23 Spanish bulls
24 Kanga's joey
25 McBain and McMahon
28 Of a symphony
33 Moat cut
36 Sandusky's lake
37 Aristo's father
38 Gillette razor
40 Razor sharpener
43 Western lily
44 Flaking
46 River to the Baltic
48 Gat
49 Split-leaf houseplant
53 Equivalent wd.
54 Eur. country
55 Puccini opera
59 Full of wisdom
64 Jai __
66 Kennedy cabinet member
67 Organize
68 Silent signal
69 Mason's Street
70 Designer, born Romain de Tirtoff
71 __ majesty
72 Bacon or Lamb paper
73 Clairvoyant

DOWN
1 Dropped off
2 Stone: pref.
3 Studio sign
4 Thrash
5 Island group off Galway
6 Have to
7 Egyptian cross
8 __ del Fuego
9 Within a building
10 Morales of "La Bamba"
11 Focal point
12 Flowed
13 Food scrap
21 U.S. tennis stadium honoree
22 Stately display
26 Muralist Rivera
27 Catch of the day
29 April 15 grp.
30 Ignited
31 Wading bird
32 PAU's successor
33 Abrasive tools
34 In need of more scratch?
35 Craniums
39 That's _ folks!
41 Quaint
42 For each
45 Hindu mystic
47 Author of "Portnoy's Complaint"
50 Mislead
51 Wears away
52 Clamorings
56 Twenty
57 __ blanche
58 Change
60 Pleasure trek
61 Maglie and Mineo
62 __ podrido
63 Act as
64 Leather punch
65 Abandon truth

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

S	L	I	P	■	S	M	O	L	T	■	P	R	O	D
K	E	N	O	■	T	A	L	I	A	■	S	A	B	E
E	N	T	H	R	O	N	I	N	G	■	E	P	I	C
G	A	L	L	I	V	A	N	T	S	■	U	P	T	O
■	■	■	■	B	E	G	■	■	■	I	D	O	■	■
M	A	S	H	■	P	E	A	C	E	C	O	R	P	S
I	D	E	E	■	I	M	M	A	N	E	N	T	L	Y
S	I	D	E	■	P	E	A	L	E	■	Y	E	A	R
D	E	A	D	C	E	N	T	E	R	■	M	U	N	I
O	U	T	L	A	S	T	I	N	G	■	S	R	T	A
■	■	E	E	L	■	■	■	D	I	M	■	■	■	■
D	I	N	S	■	W	H	E	E	Z	I	N	E	S	S
U	S	E	S	■	O	U	T	R	E	A	C	H	E	S
N	A	S	L	■	E	S	T	E	R	■	A	U	N	T
N	O	S	Y	■	S	H	E	D	S	■	A	D	D	S

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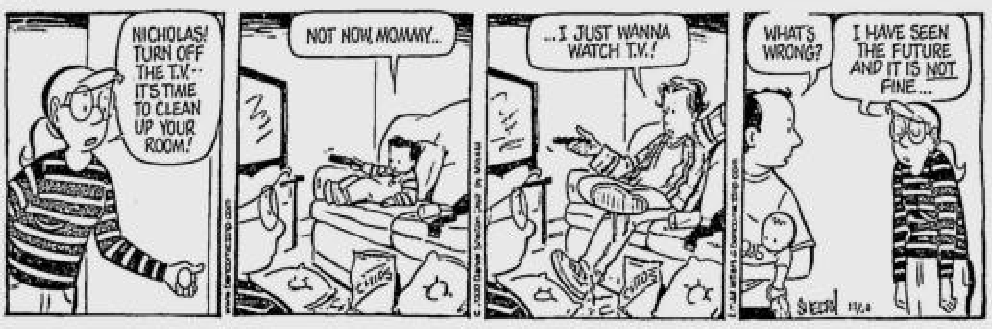
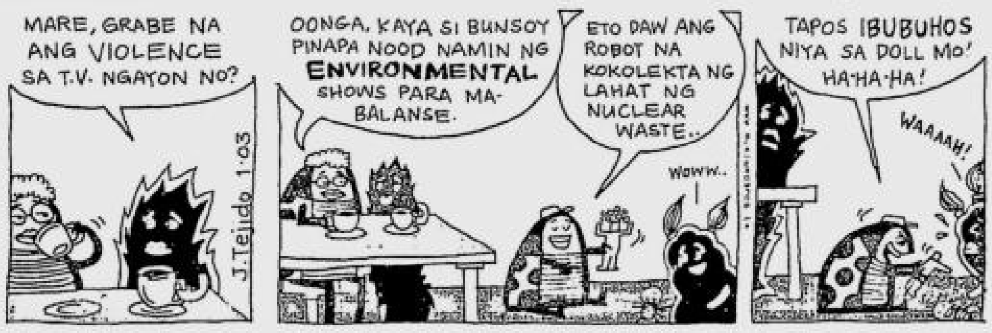
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


NICHOLAS! TURN OFF THE T.V.-- IT'S TIME TO CLEAN UP YOUR ROOM!
NOT NOW, MOMMY...
...I JUST WANNA WATCH T.V.!
WHAT'S WRONG?
I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE AND IT IS NOT FINE...

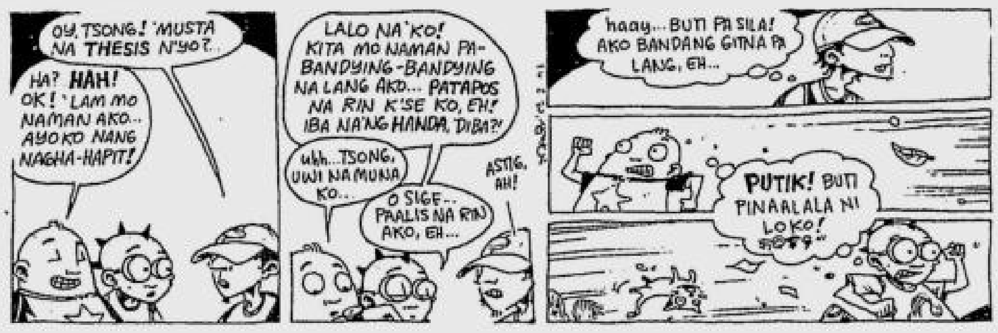
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MARE, GRABE NA ANG VIOLENCE SA T.V. NGAYON NO?
J.Tejido 1·03
OONGA. KAYA SI BUNSOY PINAPA NOOD NAMIN NG ENVIRONMENTAL SHOWS PARA MA-BALANSE.
ETO DAW ANG ROBOT NA KOKOLEKTA NG LAHAT NG NUCLEAR WASTE..
WOWW..
TAPOS IBUBUHOS NIYA SA DOLL MO' HA-HA-HA!
WAAAAH!

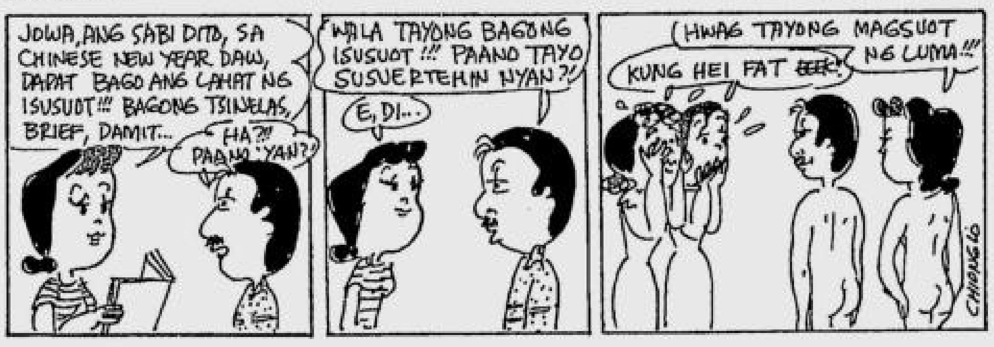
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


OY, TSONG! 'MUSTA NA THESIS N'YO?
HA? HAH! OK! 'LAM MO NAMAN AKO.. AYOKO NANG NAGHA-HAPIT!
LALO NA'KO! KITA MO NAMAN PA-BANDYING-BANDYING NA LANG AKO... PATAPOS NA RIN K'SE KO, EH! IBA NA'NG HANDA, DIBA?!
uhh...TSONG, UWI NA MUNA KO...
O SIGE-- PAALIS NA RIN AKO, EH...
ASTIG, AH!
haay... BUTI PA SILA! AKO BANDANG GITNA PA LANG, EH...
PUTIK! BUTI PINAALALA NI LOKO!

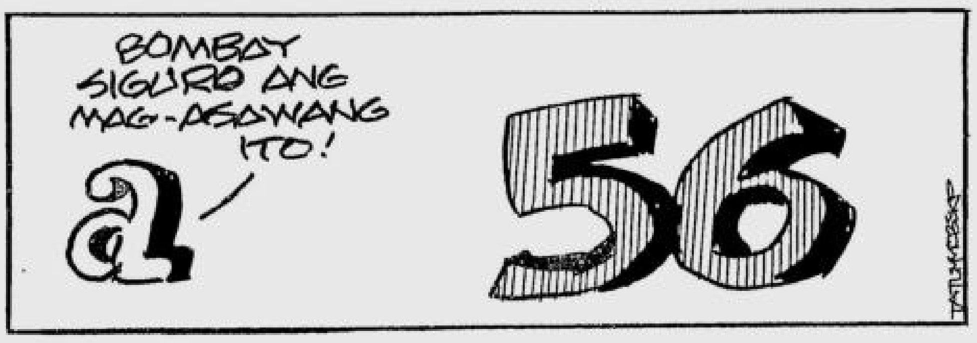
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, ANG SABI DITO, SA CHINESE NEW YEAR DAW, DAPAT BAGO ANG LAHAT NG ISUSUOT!!! BAGONG TSINELAS, BRIEF, DAMIT...
HA?!! PAANO 'YAN?!
WALA TAYONG BAGONG ISUSUOT!!! PAANO TAYO SUSUERTEHIN NYAN?!
E, DI...
KUNG HEI FAT ~~EEK~~!
HWAG TAYONG MAGSUOT NG LUMA!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


BOMBAY SIGURO ANG MAG-ASAWANG ITO!
a
56

Moss at West, Tagle at Rotary Club, Villaruel at Magnet

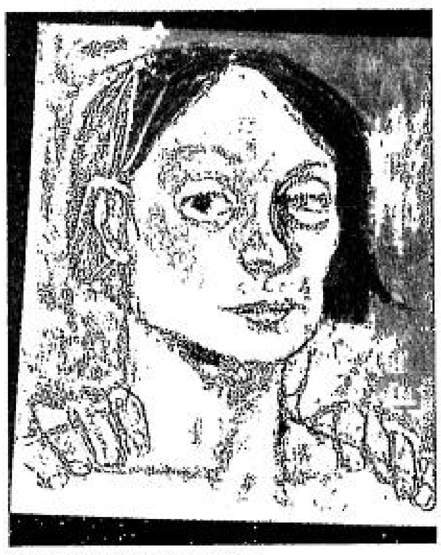
JASON Moss' seventh solo exhibit, "Moss Motel," features 30 works in mixed media at the West Gallery, Glorietta 4, 3/L, Ayala Center, Makati City. The show runs Feb. 5-18. Call 752-7028 or 752-7029.

VISUAL ARTS

POSITIVISM exponent and painter E. R. Tagle will be the guest of honor and speaker of the Rotary Club of Makati South in their weekly luncheon meeting on Feb. 3 at The Peninsula Manila, club president Antonio Ramon Ongsiako said.

Tagle will talk about his project to change the image of streetchildren by conducting free art lessons for them.

ALFRED Villaruel blurs the borders between abstraction, photography and painting in "TWENTY-twenty," his second solo, at mag:net+, The Loop, ABS-CBN Compound, Eugenio Lopez Jr. St., QC. The show, curated by Roberto Chabet, opens on Feb. 7 at 6 p.m.



"ROOM 75" by Jason Moss

AN EXHIBIT of rare and antique wood furniture, "Heart of Wood," is mounted by the Osmundo Gallery at the Art Space, Glorietta IV, Ayala Center, Makati until Feb. 5. Photo shows an 18th century altar table commode from Batangas. Call 729-5130.

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• Inside Cabin	$626.00	$1,506.00
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• 3rd/4th Passenger	$411.00	$1,291.00

14-NIGHT SCANDINAVIA/RUSSIA
Onboard Celebrity's Newest Ship "Constellation"
Itinerary: Harwich • Stockholm • Helsinski • St. Petersburg • Muuga • Rockstock (Berlin) • Copenhagen • Dover
Sailing Date: May 10, 2003

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• Inside Cabin	$1,645.00	$2,640.00
• Outside Cabin	$2,070.00	$3,065.00
• 3rd/4th Passenger	$1,170.00	$2,165.00

12-NIGHT CLASSICAL MEDITERRANEAN
Onboard Celebrity's "Millenium"
Itinerary: Barcelona • Villafranche (Nice) • Livorno (Florence/Pisa) • Civitavecchia (Rome) • Naples • Santorini • Piraeus • Dubrovnik • Venice
Sailing Date: May 11, 2003

For as low as:	Cruise Only	Fly/Cruise
• Inside Cabin	$1,495.00	$2,480.00
• Outside Cabin	$1,795.00	$2,780.00
• 3rd/4th Passenger	$995.00	$1,980.00

12-NIGHT MEDITERRANEAN
Onboard RCI's
"Brilliance of the Seas"
Itinerary: Barcelona • Villafranche (Nice) • Livorno (Florence/Pisa) • Civitavecchia (Rome) • Mykonos • Kusadasi • Piraeus • Santorini • Naples • Barcelona
Sailing Date: May 24, 2003

For as low as:	Cruise Only	Fly/Cruise
• Inside Cabin	$1,894.00	$2,879.00
• Outside Cabin	$2,144.00	$3,129.00
• 3rd/4th Passenger	$494.00	$1,479.00

Visit us at the TRAVEL TOUR EXPO Booths A32-A35 on February 7-9, 2003 at SM Megamall

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The rainbow connection

From page E1

Zambales. It's a theater presentation integrating the programs of Casa San Miguel in music, visual arts, shadow play and theater.

This one-act play (on Feb. 1-2, 8-9, 14-16, 21-23) has four short scenes depicting particular points in the history of Zambales. The play shows the changing values of the community from its agricultural roots to the present. The perspective is of one family, represented by three generations. This is a collaboration between the provincial government of Zambales and Casa San Miguel.

Yonzon said the National Arts Month is only a phase in a yearlong program of various cultural and art events nationwide. She said the NCCA's banner projects include the preservation of the Cordillera Rice Terraces, rehabilitation of the Metropolitan Theater and regular exhibits of the works of the National Artists.

The NCCA is the overall coordinating and policy-making body that systematizes and streamlines national efforts towards promoting culture and the arts. Heading NCCA are chair Pantig and executive director Yonzon.

The SubCommission on the Arts under the direction of NCCA is composed of Commissioner Ramon P. Santos Ph.D, committee on music; vice-head Boots Anson-Roa; Josefina M. Ramos Ph.D., committee on architecture; Larry A. Gabao Ph.D., dance; Herminio S. Beltran, literary arts; Christopher Rollo, visual arts; and Lutgardo Labad, dramatic arts.

For further details on the National Arts Month, contact Pam Baun of the NCCA at 527-5529/2192 locals 613 to 614 or e-mail info@ncca.gov.ph

NCCA commissioners Rod Cornezo and Chi-chi Salazar, chair Evelyn Pantig, commissioner Ramon Santos and executive director Mafin Yonzon

PHOTO BY BETOY JOHNSON

2003 Arts Month across the nation

(art installation at the plaza), poetry-reading and launching of D. Panergo's "My August Moon," a retrospective of Chito Roño's movies, serenade of old Samar love songs, community curatorship project, comedy as vehicle for critical discourse, Paseo de Calbayog, Padtapo: Kalanrakas (synthesis forum) and "The Calbayog Scrapbook."

Davao City

The Locsin Dance Workshop Studio Theater will present "Saway Likhang Kiu Kok," a 75-minute contemporary dance visualization of National Artist Ang Kiu Kok's art series on the Crucifixion, Lovers, Fire, Mother and Child and the Sitting Figures. The choreography is by Agnes Locsin. Each section will start or end with slide projections of the art works, accompanied by readings of poetry by Davao writers such as Tita Lacambra Ayala, Ricardo de Ungria and Josefina Bacani-Angeles.

TRADITIONAL crafts get spotlight.

Davao del Sur

"Balik-Tanaw: A Showcase of Songs and Dances" will be staged Feb. 20-28 in Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur. The festival will consist of an arts exhibit, a presentation of the folk songs and dances of the tri-people of Sta. Cruz (Lumad, Christian and Muslim), a dance suite showing the Bagobo courtship dance, Singkil, Kuratsa and Rosas Pandan medley, and a music suite featuring "Bol-Anon," "Alindahaw," "Pasayawa ko Day" and "Matud Nila."

General Santos City

"Kulintangan Event" will be held on Feb. 22 at the Lagao Gymnasium. It features contests on Muslim performing arts and traditional activities.

Intramuros, Manila

The Concert Nights at the Old Walls started last Saturday with pop music superstar Aiza Seguerra performing. Also to perform are violinist John Lesaca, soprano Rachel Gerodias, and pianist Jonathan Coo (Feb. 8); Vox Manila (Feb. 15); and the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra Brass Quintet performing "Musikito: Ang Batang Musiko" (Feb. 22). All performances to be held at the Pueblo Pilipino, VPY Clamshell Tent, corner Anda and Sta. Lucia Sts., Intramuros, Manila. Admission is free.

Concert at the Park in Rizal Park will feature the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra at 6 p.m. on Feb. 22.

Laoag City, Ilocos Norte

To be held on Feb. 10 is "Ilocos: Maris Ti Biag" (Colors of Life), a cultural street pageantry in dance to portray the different Ilocano folkloric rituals from birth to death. These rituals are: Pannakayanak (birth), Buniag (baptism), Panagkasangay (birthday), Paskua ti Ilocos (Christmas in Ilocandia), Fiesta, Guling-Guling (Lent), Tapa (serenade), Panagkasar (wedding), Atang (offering), and Dung-aw Panagtabon (death).

Meanwhile, the Ilocos Norte National High School-Regional School for the Arts will hold the recital, "Ilocos: Balik-Tanaw sa Kasaysayan sa Indak, Himig, Drama at Eksibit," a two-hour program of dances and songs on Feb. 15.

National Museum

The National Museum and Asia Rice Foundation will host the "Rice in the Seven Arts" symposium National Museum at the National Museum on Feb.20-21. The meeting examines the central and significant role of rice in Philippine culture as manifested in the traditional arts.

Nueva Ecija

The celebration entitled "Sulyap III 2003" will focus on the local cultural heritage. At the Central Luzon State University in Muñoz, "Naglalahong Kultura ng Novo Ecijano" will be held on Feb. 8 and 9. The festival consists of an on-the-spot painting contest, a cartoon contest, indigenous games such as *syatong, dama, lusalos, holen butas, kadang-kadang, patintero* and *harang taga*, and a *trumpo* (top) exhibition.

"Tali ng Kasayahan at Kasaysayan" on Feb. 21-23 includes competitions on streetdancing, storywriting or *kuwentong pambayan*, theater, band playing, solo singing, *patintero, dama* (Chinese checkers), photography, and painting. Other activities include Parada ng Bayan, Ilongot Cultural presentation, local arts and crafts exhibition, showing of the film "Lumang Bayan," and the staging of "Minggan Anino Bayan."

Pampanga, Davao and Cebu

The National Ballet Festival will be held in Pampanga, Davao and Cebu City on Feb. 8, 9, 16, and 23.

Roxas City

At the Panorama Resort, Libas, Roxas City, the Sigmahanon Foundation for Arts and Culture sponsors "Buhay: Kuwentong Makulay," a specialized five-day live-in creative expression workshop consisting of poetry-writing in Hiligaynon, folk storytelling, *hulubaton* or local proverbs, *patugmahanon* or riddles, theatrical presentation, art-making, and puppetry. The works shall be exhibited and performed on Feb. 5-9.

To be continued next week

Cell phone text poetry writing contest

THE NATIONAL Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) launches Textanaga, a text (SMS) poetry-writing contest in celebration of National Arts Month.

A first of its kind, the contest aims to popularize and continue the tradition of one of the country's oldest forms of poetry by using modern technology. The *tanaga* is a short poem, composed of four versified rhyming lines. Each line consists only of seven syllables, expressing a complete thought.

Textanaga entries must be written in Filipino and must express a love greeting.

Example:

Mahal na ang de-lata
mahal pa'ng abre-lata;
minamahal kong sinta,
nagmahal ka na ba?

Di maubos ang bango
ng kamya sa dibdib mo.
Masdan, ang paruparo
Pagsagi'y naglalango.

Contestants must submit their entries through text to any of the following numbers: (0919) 317-5708 and (0916) 730-2695. Entries must be accompanied by the name of the author. Entries must be sent before 5 p.m. each Friday of the contest week. A contestant may only submit one entry each week.

Every week for the month of February, judges will pick a winner (Text Makata ng Linggo) who will receive P5,000. Three consolation prizes of P2,000 will also be awarded. A grand prize winner (Text Makata ng Buwan) will be chosen among the four weekly winners and will receive a cash prize of P10,000.

NCCA employees, members of the Textanaga Committee, and their relatives to the second degree of consanguinity are disqualified from joining the competition.

Call Salvador "Badong" Biglaen at 922-1830 or the NCCA at 527-2192.

Top UK multicultural writers in Silliman, Remedios Circle and Shangri-La Plaza

THE BRITISH Council, in collaboration with Silliman University, brings two of UK's talented multicultural writers—Atima Srivastava and Hong Ying—to conduct a workshop on the Teaching of Creative Writing on Feb. 3-5 at the Silliman University in Dumaguete City.

Atima and Hong Ying will be joined by multiawarded Filipino writers Timothy Montes and Nino de Veyra.

The target participants are teachers of literature and creative writing, creative writers and graduate students of literature and creative writing.

The workshop aims to promote a diverse program of literature activity that responds to the British Council objectives for creativity, learning and society, and meets the changing needs of our audiences; to introduce the participants to contemporary methodologies in the teaching of literature and creative writing; and to showcase the best practices and advice on the most current literature teaching approaches.

Registration fee is P1,500.

Call 914-1011 to 14 or e-mail: nannette.mercado@britishcouncil.org.ph.

Meanwhile, the British Council, in collaboration with British Airways, Eastwood City Walk, Shangri-La Mall and Thames International Business School, presents Atima and Hong in literary readings at the Remedios Circle at 6 p.m. on Feb. 7; and the 2/L Shangri-La Mall at 6 p.m. on Feb. 8.

Corregidor Island, a monument to peace

SPACED OUT

Augusto F. Villalon

REMEMBER Corregidor? It certainly has good name recall among Filipinos. However, what exactly do today's Filipinos know about Corregidor? Fifty years after the Battle of Corregidor, its historical significance seems to have been forgotten.

Probably the most important World War II icon in the country, Corregidor is the island fortress standing guard at the mouth of Manila Bay. In the early days of WW II, it sheltered President Manuel Quezon, General Douglas MacArthur, and other key Philippine Commonwealth and American officials and their families. After their escape, a long, momentous and bloody battle took place on the small island. Filipino and American troops stubbornly held out in Corregidor until its fall.

Corregidor's history is a result of its strategic location. During the Spanish era, it was the island where all ships entering or leaving Manila Bay stopped to have their papers checked and corrected, hence the name "*corregidor*," which means "corrector" in Spanish. Fortifications, as well as a small barrio with a church, a school and houses for the residents, were established by the Spanish.

During the Fil-American War, the Americans first occupied the island, building a convalescent hospital for wounded troops. In 1906, they realized the strategic importance of the island and began a full-scale fortification program. By 1922, Fort Mills (as Corregidor was called then) was completely fortified, ready to protect Manila from any invasion.

Living testament

Today's Corregidor is a living testament to WW II, a memorial to the valiant men who defended our country. Its fortifications, rusting artillery and ruins of military buildings still stand. The guns of war have been silent for half a century how. Walking on the same ground 50 years later brings the memory of the war into peaceful harmony with nature. Corregidor has been transformed into the Philippines' most powerful monument to peace.

The Corregidor Foundation valiantly continues to preserve the physical reminders of WW II. Preserving the building ruins and artillery while embarking on a reforestation program has physically softened the harsh memories that the WW II artifacts express. Under its canopy of trees, Corregidor is finally at rest, now a place for Filipinos to experience history and to commune with nature. The island is now a place of astounding tranquility.

Reminders of WW II are still everywhere in Corregidor. The ruins of the Mile Long Barracks, Topside, the Hospital and the Theater bring images of vigorous military life on the island. The Parade Ground, once the site of precision drills, is now a large open field. The historic presence is so strong that you can almost see the artillery being manned, work going on in the military buildings, and life happening in the barrio.

The original plans were to reconstruct the little barrio near the beach, but only the church has been completed to date. A tall cupola covers the central pavilion of the Pacific War Memorial. Plaques commemorating the significant battle sites line its walls, framing an outdoor to a vista of the sea. Beside it stands the Filipino Heroes Memorial, a museum with memorabilia that tell the Corregidor story from official and personal perspectives.

The rest of Corregidor stands in ruins. Skeletons of original volumes and architectural details are still discernable. The remnants of military buildings, many still pockmarked by bullet holes and others with sections collapsed from bombing, stand precariously. Segments of concrete continue to peel and flake away from the carcass of the main structure. Fragments of concrete hang dangerously, tenuously connected to the frame of main structure by a fragile web of rusted rebars. The state is precarious.

Seeds dropped by birds on the cracked walls have grown into bushes, and in other areas, mature trees. The roots have wedged their way into the concrete, developing threatening cracks in the already fragile walls. The growth on the ruins endangers the structures. The romantic Angkor Wat image of ruins under a tropical jungle canopy of leaves with vegetation and trees growing from the walls misleads. The image is a danger signal that calls for immediate conservation work.

The state of some ruins is so unstable that stricter safety measures will have to be taken in the near future to protect the visitors.

Conservation needed

Corregidor is not an exception to the necessity for immediate conservation required in many Philippine monuments. The Corregidor Foundation is laying the ground work to raise national and international funding to prevent the ruins from collapsing.

Well-maintained lawns circle the ruins. Roads, open spaces and public areas are impeccably maintained. Public toilets are remarkably clean. Care has obviously gone to the maintenance of the island. More remarkable is the tourism development program. Corregidor proves that tourism exists on many levels, and that it is not a site that relies on commercialism to attract arrivals.

Getting to Corregidor is easy. Sun Cruises runs a daily fast craft from the Cultural Center of the Philippines dock, departing in the morning and returning in the early afternoon of the same day. A replica of a wooden tranvia takes visitors on a guided tour around the island. If you wish to stay overnight, book at the Corregidor Hotel or at the less expensive Hostel. For nature enthusiasts, explore the island on a bike, set up a tent in the campgrounds or on the beach. A shop-cum-café near the South Pier not only serves great food, it also rents out bikes, tents, and diving gear.

On my visit there recently, the Philippine Navy was doing its bit to help Corregidor. Led by the energetic vice admiral Victorino Hingco, flag-officer in command of the Philippine Navy, the Seabees and Marines filled the beach, clearing out the stones and rocks. Helping out the Navy were the members of the Chinese International Community Group who had donated the cleaning equipment, shovels and wheelbarrows.

Life in a city like Manila is one of constant stress. Corregidor is one of those secret places for decompressing, one of the few havens of peace within easy reach from the city. It is where history and nature coexist in total harmony. It the perfect place for us, whether old or young, to come into close quarters with our history if only to rekindle our lost sense of nation.

But the bonus of Corregidor is that history does not only come alive, the abundance of the island's greenery frames history in an environment of peace.

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EVEN the ruins of Corregidor need conservation.